

Signs of Christ's Soon Return

Our Lord's Great Prophecy

Christ forewarned His disciples of the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs to take place prior to the coming of the Son of man. The whole of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is a prophecy concerning the events to precede this event, and the destruction of Jerusalem is used to typify the last great destruction of the world by fire.—Manuscript 77, 1899. LDE 18.1

Christ upon the Mount of Olives rehearsed the fearful judgments that were to precede His second coming: “Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: ... Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” [Matthew 24:6-8]. While these prophecies received a partial fulfillment at the destruction of Jerusalem, they have a more direct application in the last days.—Testimonies for the Church 5:753 (1899). LDE 18.2

Signs in the Heavens

At the close of the great papal persecution, Christ declared, the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light. Next, the stars should fall from heaven. And He says, “Learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:32, 33, margin). LDE 19.1

Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, “This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” These signs have appeared. [See The Great Controversy, 306-308, 333, 334.] Now we know of a surety that the Lord's coming is at hand.—The Desire of Ages, 632 (1898). LDE 19.2

Signs on the Earth

Jesus declares: “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations” (Luke 21:25; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24-26; Revelation 6:12-17). Those who behold these harbingers of His coming are to “know that it is near, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:33).—The Great Controversy, 37, 38 (1911). LDE 19.3

The nations are in unrest. Times of perplexity are upon us. Men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming upon the earth. But those who believe in God will hear His voice amid the storm, saying, “It is I; be not afraid.”—The Signs of the Times, October 9, 1901. LDE 19.4

Strange and eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven—events which it was declared should shortly precede the great day of God. Everything in the world is in an unsettled state.—Manuscript Releases 3:313 (1908). LDE 20.1

False Prophets

As one of the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, Christ had said, “Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” [Matthew 24:11]. False prophets did rise, deceiving the

people and leading great numbers into the desert. Magicians and sorcerers, claiming miraculous power, drew the people after them into the mountain solitudes. But this prophecy was spoken also for the last days. This sign is given as a sign of the second advent.—The Desire of Ages, 631 (1898). LDE 20.2

We shall encounter false claims, false prophets will arise, there will be false dreams and false visions, but preach the Word; be not drawn away from the voice of God in His Word.—Selected Messages 2:49 (1894). LDE 20.3

I have been shown many who will claim to be especially taught of God, and will attempt to lead others, and from mistaken ideas of duty they will undertake a work that God has never laid upon them. Confusion will be the result. Let everyone seek God most earnestly for himself that he may individually understand His will.—Selected Messages 2:72 (1893). LDE 20.4

An Experience With a False Prophet

Last night a young man, a stranger to us all, but professing to be a brother from Victoria [Australia], called upon us and asked to see Sister White. It was evening and I declined seeing him. We invited him to remain with us during the night, however, and to take breakfast. After our usual morning worship, as we were about to go to our various employments, this young man arose and with a commanding gesture requested us to sit down. He said, "Have you any hymnbooks? We will sing a hymn, then I have a message to give you." I said, "If you have a message, give it without delay, for we are very much pressed to get off the American mail and have no time to lose." He then began to read something he had written, which stated among other things that the judgment has now begun upon the living.... LDE 21.1

I listened as he went on and finally said, "My brother, you are not exactly in your right mind. State plainly how your message concerns us. Please let us know at once. Your mind is overstrained, you misapprehend your work. Much that you have said is in accordance with the Bible, and we believe every word of that. But you are overexcited. Please state what you have for us." LDE 21.2

Well, he said that we must pack up and move at once to Battle Creek. I asked his reasons, and he responded, "To give this message that the judgment has begun upon the living." I answered him, "The work which the Lord has given us to do is not yet finished. When our work here is completed we are sure the Lord will let us know that it is time for us to move to Battle Creek, instead of teaching you our duty".... I left him for Brother Starr to talk with further while I resumed my writing. LDE 21.3

He told Brother Starr that when Sister White spoke to him so kindly, and yet with such authority, he began to see that he had made a mistake, that the impressions which had moved him so strongly were not consistent or reasonable. Although our family is large, consisting of ten members, besides three visitors, we decided to have this young man stay with us for a time. We dare not have him go with people who will treat him harshly and condemn him, neither do we want him to repeat his "revelations." We will have him remain for a little time where we can associate with him and if possible lead him in safe, sure paths.—Letter 66, 1894. LDE 22.1

Gluttony and Intemperance

Gluttony and intemperance lie at the foundation of the great moral depravity in our world. Satan is aware of this and he is constantly tempting men and women to indulge the taste at the expense of health and even life itself. Eating, drinking, and dressing are made the aim of life with the world. Just such a state of things existed before the Flood. And this state of dissipation is one of the marked evidences of the soon close of this earth's history.—Letter 34, 1875. LDE 22.2

The picture which Inspiration has given of the antediluvian world represents too truly the condition to which modern society is fast hastening.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 102 (1890). LDE 22.3

We know that the Lord is coming very soon. The world is fast becoming as it was in the days of Noah. It is given over to selfish indulgence. Eating and drinking are carried to excess. Men are drinking the poisonous liquor that makes them mad.—Letter 308, 1907. LDE 23.1

Deeds of Violence

In the days of Noah the overwhelming majority was opposed to the truth, and enamored with a tissue of falsehoods. The land was filled with violence. War, crime, murder, was the order of the day. Just so will it be before Christ's second coming.—The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 1:1090 (1891). LDE 23.2

The labor unions are quickly stirred to violence if their demands are not complied with. Plainer and plainer is it becoming that the inhabitants of the world are not in harmony with God. No scientific theory can explain the steady march of evil workers under the generalship of Satan. In every mob wicked angels are at work, rousing men to commit deeds of violence.... LDE 23.3

The perversity and cruelty of men will reach such a height that God will reveal Himself in His majesty. Very soon the wickedness of the world will have reached its limit and, as in the days of Noah, God will pour out His judgments.—The Upward Look, 334 (1903). LDE 23.4

The terrible reports we hear of murders and robberies, of railway accidents and deeds of violence, tell the story that the end of all things is at hand. Now, just now, we need to be preparing for the Lord's second coming.—Letter 308, 1907. LDE 23.5

Wars and Disasters

The tempest is coming and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent. Confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near!—Messages to Young People, 89, 90 (1890). LDE 24.1

In the last scenes of this earth's history war will rage. There will be pestilence, plague and famine. The waters of the deep will overflow their boundaries. Property and life will be destroyed by fire and flood. We should be preparing for the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for them that love Him.—Maranatha, 174 (1897). LDE 24.2

Great Balls of Fire

Last Friday morning, just before I awoke, a very impressive scene was presented before me. I seemed to awake from sleep but was not in my home. From the windows I could behold a terrible conflagration. Great balls of fire were falling upon houses, and from these balls fiery arrows were flying in every direction. It was impossible to check the fires that were kindled, and many places were being destroyed. The terror of the people was indescribable. After a time I awoke and found myself at home.—Evangelism, 29 (1906). LDE 24.3

I saw an immense ball of fire fall among some beautiful mansions, causing their instant destruction. I heard someone say: "We knew that the judgments of God were coming upon the earth, but we did not know that they would come so soon." Others, with agonized voices, said: "You knew! Why then did you not tell us? We did not know."—Testimonies for the Church 9:28 (1909). LDE 25.1

Earthquakes and Floods

The enemy has worked, and he is working still. He is come down in great power, and the Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the earth. God has withdrawn His hand. We have only to look at Johnstown [Pennsylvania]. He did not prevent the devil from wiping that whole city out of existence. [On May 31, 1889, an estimated 2,200 people lost their lives in the Johnstown flood when a dam broke after many days of heavy rains.] And these very things will increase until the close of this earth's history.—Sermons and Talks 1:109 (1889). LDE 25.2

The earth's crust will be rent by the outbursts of the elements concealed in the bowels of the earth. These elements, once broken loose, will sweep away the treasures of those who for years have been adding to their wealth by securing large possessions at starvation prices from those in their employ. And the religious world, too, is to be terribly shaken, for the end of all things is at hand.—Manuscript Releases 3:208 (1891). LDE 25.3

The time is now come when one moment we may be on solid earth, the next the earth may be heaving beneath our feet. Earthquakes will take place when least expected.—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 421 (1896). LDE 26.1

In fires, in floods, in earthquakes, in the fury of the great deep, in calamities by sea and by land, the warning is given that God's Spirit will not always strive with men.—Manuscript Releases 3:315 (1897). LDE 26.2

Before the Son of man appears in the clouds of heaven everything in nature will be convulsed. Lightning from heaven uniting with the fire in the earth will cause the mountains to burn like a furnace and pour out their floods of lava over villages and cities. Molten masses of rock thrown into the water by the upheaval of things hidden in the earth will cause the water to boil and send forth rocks and earth. There will be mighty earthquakes and great destruction of human life.—The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 7:946 (1907). LDE 26.3

Crime, Famines, Pestilence

Satan is working in the atmosphere; he is poisoning the atmosphere, and here we are dependent upon God for our lives—our present and eternal lives. And being in the position that we are, we need to be wide awake, wholly devoted, wholly converted, wholly consecrated to God. But we seem to sit as though we were paralyzed. God of heaven, wake us up!—Selected Messages 2:52 (1890). LDE 26.4

God has not restrained the powers of darkness from carrying forward their deadly work of vitiating the air, one of the sources of life and nutrition, with a deadly miasma. Not only is vegetable life affected but man suffers from pestilence.... These things are the result of drops from the vials of God's wrath [God takes responsibility for that which he allows or does not prevent. See Exodus 7:3; 8:32; 1 Chronicles 10:4, 13, 14.] being sprinkled on the earth, and are but faint representations of what will be in the near future.—Selected Messages 3:391 (1891). LDE 27.1

Famines will increase. Pestilences will sweep away thousands. Dangers are all around us from the powers without and satanic workings within, but the restraining power of God is now being exercised.—Manuscript Releases 19:382 (1897). LDE 27.2

I have been shown that the Spirit of the Lord is being withdrawn from the earth. God's keeping power will soon be refused to all who continue to disregard His commandments. The reports of fraudulent transactions, murders, and crimes of every kind are coming to us daily. Iniquity is becoming so common a thing that it no longer shocks the senses as it once did.—Letter 258, 1907. LDE 27.3

God's Purpose in Calamities

What mean the awful calamities by sea—vessels hurled into eternity without a moment's warning? What mean the accidents by land—fire consuming the riches that men have hoarded, much of which has been accumulated by oppression of the poor? The Lord will not interfere to protect the property of those who transgress His law, break His covenant, and trample upon His Sabbath, accepting in its place a spurious rest day. LDE 27.4

The plagues of God are already falling upon the earth, sweeping away the most costly structures as if by a breath of fire from heaven. Will not these judgments bring professing Christians to their senses? God permits them to come that the world may take heed, that sinners may be afraid and tremble before Him.—Manuscript Releases 3:311 (1902). LDE 28.1

God has a purpose in permitting these calamities to occur. They are one of His means of calling men and women to their senses. By unusual workings through nature God will express to doubting human agencies that which He clearly reveals in His Word.—Manuscript Releases 19:279 (1902). LDE 28.2

How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of disorganized, unregulated forces of nature, wholly beyond the control of man, but in them all God's purpose may be read. They are among the agencies by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.—Prophets and Kings, 277 (c. 1914). LDE 28.3

Coming Events Are in the Hands of the Lord

The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations as well as the concerns of His church in His own charge.—Testimonies for the Church 5:753 (1889). LDE 29.1

These symbolical representations [the fiery serpents in the wilderness] serve a double purpose. From them God's people learn not only that the physical forces of the earth are under the control of the Creator, but also that under His control are the religious movements of the nations. Especially is this true with reference to the enforcement of Sunday observance.—Manuscript Releases 19:281 (1902). LDE 29.2

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great Powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass.—Evangelism, 65 (1902). LDE 29.3

As the wheel-like complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of the earth. [See Ezekiel 1:4, 26; 10:8; Daniel 4:17, 25, 32.]—Education, 178 (1903). LDE 29.4

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the Word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.—Prophets and Kings, 499, 500 (c. 1914). LDE 29.5

Heaven's Regard for Earth's Affairs

In sparing the life of the first murderer, God presented before the whole universe a lesson bearing upon the great controversy.... It was His purpose, not merely to put down the rebellion, but to demonstrate to all the universe the nature of rebellion....The holy inhabitants of other worlds were watching with the deepest interest the events taking place on the earth.... LDE 30.1

God carries with Him the sympathy and approval of the whole universe as step by step His great plan advances to its complete fulfillment.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 78, 79 (1890). LDE 30.2

The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 68, 69 (1890). LDE 30.3

The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil.—Prophets and Kings, 148 (c. 1914). LDE 30.4

Our little world is the lesson book of the universe.—The Desire of Ages, 19 (1898).
[Ellen White states that the unfallen worlds and the heavenly angels watched Christ's struggle in Gethsemane "with intense interest" (The Desire of Ages, 693). In discussing Christ's four-thousand-year battle with Satan and his ultimate victory on the cross she uses such phrases as "the heavenly universe beheld," "all heaven and the unfallen worlds had been witnesses," "they heard," "they saw," "heaven viewed," "what a sight for the heavenly universe!" See The Desire of Ages, 693, 759, 760.] LDE 31.1