

## ***Session 10 Cosmic Signs in the End Times***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The handout that you have here is the handout for the ninth session on the book of Joel. We're talking about cosmic signs, or signs in the heavens. This is part of the drama and preparation of the end-time church. It's not just an interesting subject that's supposed to arouse our curiosity; it's actually a very practical subject with a very profound impact upon the Body of Christ. When they understand, believe in, and recognize the signs when they're happening, then their hearts respond in an appropriate way because they've recognized them as a divine sign, supernaturally given at a critical time in history to signify the strategic hour that we're living in.

There are many reasons for the signs, and one of them is to prepare the Church with the knowledge of the timing that we're in. The signs are so dramatic; they've never happened in any other time in history, except perhaps on a very small scale. But the intensity of the signs and the number and the magnitude, all in one time frame, is something so dramatic it could never, ever be misunderstood. And it will be clear that God is actively moving and preparing the end-time church for what's on His heart.

### **“THE SUN AND MOON GROW DARK, AND THE STARS DIMINISH THEIR BRIGHTNESS”**

We're going to look at the context of Joel 2:10-11; that's our focus tonight. “The earth quakes before them”—the earth trembles or shakes before this evil army that was attacking the nation of Israel. “The heavens tremble”—meaning the atmosphere and the sky and the solar system. When the atmosphere is trembling, it's really intense. “The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness” (Joel 2:10)—in this hour of history. This is literal; it's not figurative. I've read a number of commentaries over the years on Joel and so many of them try to make this poetic and symbolic. It's literal! That's the point of it: it's literal.

### **THE LORD GIVES VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY, FOR HIS CAMP IS VERY GREAT”**

“The Lord gives voice before His army” (Joel 2:11). The Lord speaks. There's a prophetic anointing; there's a divine direction of the army of God on the earth. The army of God has both a negative and positive dimension to it. We'll look at that later on. Here the Lord is giving prophetic leadership before His army. He's the One in control, directing the army that's His vessel, His vehicle to fulfill His purposes.

In this case, here in Joel 2, the army is an evil army of Babylonian. It's fulfilling His purpose of purifying Israel, disciplining and purifying the nation of Israel. It's His army in the sense that even though they're evil and wicked, they're fulfilling the will and the purpose of God to purify His people. He uses some interesting language to describe them: “It's My army! It's My instrument. It's My tool that I'm directing and leading. I am giving direction to them.”

It doesn't mean that God is responsible for all their wickedness; it means that God is responsible for using them to make an impact upon His people.

Then the Lord raises up another instrument, His army that comes from heaven in Revelation 19 and punishes the end-time army of wickedness that's used to discipline the people of God. We'll look at that a little later.

Joel says, “His camp is very great” (Joel 2:11b)—very strong. When the Lord puts His hand upon any tool, any vessel, whether it's righteous or unrighteous, when the Lord puts His hand upon them and says, “I have need of

thee,” and directs and empowers them, they’re unstoppable. His camp is very, very powerful. His purpose with whatever vessel He’s using is unstoppable in the timing and the will of God. “For strong is the One who executes His word” (ibid)—or, mighty is the God who fulfills His plan. Strong is the God who executes His plan that’s given in the prophetic Scriptures. In other words, The Lord says, “I will show My might as I fulfill My prophetic purposes in the end times.”

### **THE GREAT AND VERY TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD**

“For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible” (Joel 2:11c). I think it’s interesting that the word *very* is added here. It’s very terrible. It’s great, it’s awesome to the people who say yes. To the people of God there’s power and signs and wonders, angelic visitations and anointing for purity, the anointing of the seal of God upon our heart for love. It’s the greatest hour for the people of God. But for those who say no, it’s a very terrible hour; it’s the very worst hour for the people who resist the purposes of God. It’s a great hour for those who say yes, and a very terrible hour for those who say no.

### **WHO CAN ENDURE THE DRAMA WITHOUT THE FAVOR OF GOD?**

Joel then ends with a question: “Who can endure this intense drama? Who can endure it?” (Joel 2:11d, paraphrased). In other words, who can endure it without divine favor? If you don’t have the favor of God, the forgiveness of God, if you don’t have the smile of God on your life, how can you endure the tremendous upheaval and drama that’s going to happen? Who can endure it without God’s favor? His favor includes His forgiveness and mercy. Who can endure it without His smile over your life? Who can endure it without a supernatural anointing? In other words, living life in the natural without divine, supernatural enabling, we won’t be able to endure it. We won’t be able to obey the Lord to the end. Without divine power, we will renounce Him. We won’t be able to have direction without prophetic intervention. We will have neither provision nor protection. We can’t endure it without supernatural divine intervention. That’s the point of it.

### **A PEOPLE WHO WILL HAVE NO OTHER OPTION EXCEPT WHOLEHEARTEDNESS**

The people who want to learn to live life without God won’t be able to stand true to God; nor will they have provision, direction, protection. They won’t be able to make it in that day because the intensity is going to increase. Daniel 12:1 tells us it will be the most intense hour in all human history. It’s the greatest hour of trouble and the greatest hour of divine power of any time in history. Jesus quotes Daniel 12:1 in Matthew 24:21 and says in essence the same thing. This will be the most intense hour in all history for the release of the power and judgment of God.

“Who can endure it?” Well, the answer is, we can: by being wholehearted and throwing ourselves into the God who has a burning heart for us. That’s the only solution. There will be no escape hatch except for the favor of God. That’s the message of Joel. That’s what the end times are supposed to produce, a people who have no other option except wholeheartedness. God is removing all the other options of survival, of direction, of provision; all the other options will be removed until God and God alone is seen to be the provision and the One who satisfies our heart and protects our life and directs us.

It’s very significant that verses 10-11 are exactly where they in Joel 2, for they follow the description of an evil army in Joel 2:1-9. Now why would God introduce the subject of these cosmic, heavenly, supernatural signs related to the subject of this evil army in Joel 2:1-9?

The message that God wants to send is that He's in control. He's the One raising up the evil army to accomplish His purposes. Even though He's not causing them to be evil, He's not making them do wrong, since they've chosen to be evil, He says, "I have need of you to purify My people." The message that's being declared here is that God is saying, "I have power over everything; I'm in total control." We're assured that because God is moving and manipulating the stars and the sun and the moon, and all the powers in the heavenly realm, we have absolute certainty that He's aware of what's going on with the armies in the earthly realm, and that He has power over them.

This is an end-time army in Joel 2:1-9. That's the accurate way to say it, because the last days began on the day of Pentecost. And the end times is the final years of the last days, if you want to be theologically accurate. In the end times this evil army of Joel 2:1-9 is the most powerful force in all the earth in the natural realm. It's a worldwide army led by the Antichrist. It's so overwhelming in its strength that no one can escape the influence of this evil army. It impacts all our lives. It's as if the Body of Christ will cry out, "Lord, are You aware of the dilemma that we're in? Are You aware of how much power they have?"

God says, "Watch this. I can speak and the stars will fall from their place. I have so much more power over these earthly armies; I'm orchestrating this whole plan." And He displays His power in the heavens in order to give assurance that He has full power over the lesser realm, the earthly armies. That's one of the reasons He gives this heavenly power display in the hour and in the timing of the great worldwide army that's evil under the hand of the Antichrist. He's saying, "These earthly armies are nothing; watch this!" And the sun loses its light. He says, "I can take the light away from the sun effortlessly! These little armies on the earth are nothing to Me!"

In Isaiah 40, God reveals how much power He has over the sun and the stars. He says, "The nations of the earth are as nothing before Me" (Is. 40:12, paraphrased). In other words, "All their combined powers cannot stop God at all. He can direct the heavens; He can direct the stars." That's the message He's giving here.

### **"BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION, SOUND AN ALARM IN MY HOLY MOUNTAIN"**

This is a little review from our last session. In Joel 2:1-2, the Lord says, "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand" (Joel 2:1). There's coming a time where God will release His power for righteousness and for the judgment of rebellion. He calls that day "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains" (v. 2). That is how it will be for those who resist God, which is the majority of the human race. Even though there will be over a billion saved, there will be billions more who say no. "A people"—you can write the phrase, "an army"—"come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations" (v. 2b).

"There's coming an army!" Joel says. For those of you who have been here, you know that there are two applications in history to this army described in Joel 2:1-9. There are two applications that are on the heart of God. God was thinking of these two armies when He gave these two prophecies. It's not like we're making it fit in; this was on God's heart. First, there was an army of Joel's generation called the Babylonian army; but the invasion of the nation of Babylon to discipline and purify Israel was only a partial fulfillment of this passage. It was in no means the fullness of what God intended by this passage, though it did discipline Israel in 586 BC.

There's an end-time fulfillment of this army in Joel 2:1-9; it's a worldwide evil empire under the reign of a worldwide dictator called the Antichrist attacking Israel. The Lord is allowing it to happen. They're going to attack Israel, and then they're going to turn on the nations of the world. At first they're going after Israel; then he shows his true colors, the true nature of this empire. It's world domination, to rule and conquer every nation of the earth. It's a hostile empire at the end of the age. That's the fullness of the fierce army described in Joel 2:1-9. That's why Joel says, "A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations" (Joel 2:1-9).

Then we have a little description of a rebellion at the end of the Millennium, in Revelation 20, against the camp of the Lord. I won't go into that right now, but that's the "many successive generations" that He's talking about.

I won't read the whole passage but God makes a very important, very interesting point in Revelation 17:16-17. He says, "I will cause ten nations to come together in unity and give their entire power—their military power, their political power, their economic power—over to this man. I will cause them to believe in this evil worldwide leader, and to give their money and their armies and all their influence to this one evil man. I will cause them to do it because they will fulfill My purpose when I make them do this."

My point is, God is actively leading this purpose. He wants it to come to pass because He wants to purify the nation of Israel; He wants to purify the end-time church, the people of God, and He's going to use this demonstration of unrighteousness as part of His end-time purpose along with the outpouring of the great power of God to bring His Church to purity and to fulfill the great harvest.

#### **FOUR THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE FINAL HOUR OF NATURAL HISTORY**

I have four things that will happen, and then we're going to get right into the passage. Four things will happen in the final hour of natural history.

Number one: there will be a full release of the power of God. I'm talking about a full release in terms of natural history. There's no time in history where the power of God will be greater. There will be a full release of the power of God with signs and wonders, the prophetic anointing and a great end-time harvest, the fantastic revival, beyond anything that we could imagine.

Alongside this great release of the power of God, God is going to allow human sin to reach the greatest capacity that it can reach. Humans on the earth, billions of people, will reach the full potential of the human capacity to sin and rebel against God. It says in many passages that sin will become ripe; it will become fully mature on the earth. Not only is the power of God released in fullness, but sin is at its fullest. Sin is at its fullest. That's terrifying.

Number three: Satan's rage will be at its fullness as well, Satan's rage against the human race. He won't just rage against the people of God, he will be raging against anyone who is human. He hates humans, even those who cooperate with him in evil. He hates the people who obey him. His rage will be against the human race, particularly against the people of God, but not them alone.

Number four: there will be a full release of the wrath of God, the judgment of God. We read this a number of times in the book of Revelation.

So there are four things working together. I mean, talk about dramatic! It's beyond any time frame. I believe that we're at the beginning of this. I believe that this is going to come to fullness in the next, ten, twenty, thirty, forty years. We don't know exactly when, but we believe that we're in the time frame where this great drama is unfolding.

Number one: the power of God is going to reach a fullness far beyond the book of Acts. Number two: human sin will reach its full capacity. Number three: Satan's rage, his wrath, is going to reach full capacity. And number four, the fullness of the wrath of God will be poured out in natural history.

Those are four things combined together. The reason that the Lord is letting these four things operate together in one generation, in one twenty-, thirty-, forty-year period—we don't know the boundaries of it; it's not exactly an easy thing to measure when it begins. We know when it ends: when the Lord appears in the clouds. But the beginning is subtle. It's beginning in intensity in one part of the world and not so intensely in another part of the world.

### **HE WANTS TO BRING THE GREATEST NUMBER AT THE DEEPEST LEVEL OF LOVE**

I believe that we're at the beginning of the beginning of this process. The reason that God is allowing these four things to come together in fullness in the same time frame is because He wants to bring the largest number of people to Jesus at the deepest level of love possible without violating their free will. He wants to bring the largest number of people to the deepest level of love without violating their free will, nor His own justice and righteousness. He will be utterly fair to the Devil. He will not violate justice. He'll treat the Devil in one hundred percent fairness, or justice. It's amazing. He will let every one do what they want to do at the heart level. In other words, if they want God, He says, "There will be more experience of Me than you could ever imagine. And if you want Satan, you can have more of him than you ever imagined. You can have the fullness of whichever dimension you want."

The problem is that you do get the fullness of the one you picked. It won't be a place where we have half God and half sin and half the Devil and half this and half that. God is going to cause the whole planet to line up one hundred percent in one direction or the other. The grey zone is going to be removed. It seems awfully intense, but I want to say this: as intense as this is—sin becoming utterly sinful, Satan's rage, God's wrath—God is going to use the least severe means to reach the largest number of people at the deepest level of love. He's going to use the least severe means.

You think, "Well, this seems pretty severe!"

But when we stand before God, He will say, "Oh, that was the best I could make it to get the job done." Even in His treating of the Devil He will not violate His justice. He's utterly fair to everyone involved. And He will produce the end-time harvest in deep love.

### **THE MERCY OF GOD IN THE INTENSITY OF COSMIC SIGNS**

Joel 2:10-11. Why the cosmic signs? Number one: because they're so dramatic and there are so many of them happening at the same time, God is declaring to the people who love Him that this is the end times. There's no mistake about it. However, it says in 2 Peter 3:3 that the mockers will continue to mock saying, "It's not the end times." Even in the Church some will say, "This isn't the end times!" And bizarre things will happen and even some of God's people will have that mocking spirit on them, at least for a season. They'll either give

themselves fully to it or they'll get rid of it a hundred percent. They're going to go one way or the other. But for a little while there will be a scoffing spirit, even on some of God's people.

Because of the intense dramatic nature of the signs and the amount of signs happening in the same time frame, He's saying, "This is the end times. So gird yourself, prepare yourself, for this fierce drama." It's a tremendous mercy of God that we can be assured that we can't miss the knowledge that we're in that time.

### **THE ASSURANCE THAT GOD IS FULLY IN CONTROL**

Another thing that God is saying is that He's in full control. If He has authority over the stars in the heavens, you know that He has power over the armies on the earth. He's demonstrating that He has full control and full awareness of everything going on. Every detail has been orchestrated.

Another purpose is to give us the assurance that He's demonstrating His power on our behalf. It's good to know that He's in control, but the Lord says, "I want it to be more personal: I want every one of My people to have the assurance that the power that I have to move the stars in the heavens is the power that I'll use to relate to you, to prepare you for this hour of history."

If God can direct the heavenly realm with power and wisdom, you know that He can direct the earthly realm, because the earthly realm is a lot easier to direct. It's a lot easier to move an army around or to defeat an army than it is to move the stars around and turn the lights out on the sun. It's a lot easier. I mean, ungodly men have defeated ungodly armies. The Lord says, "It's easy to defeat the ungodly army. Even the ungodly men of history have done that. But no one can manipulate the sun and moon and stars."

The giant statement that He's really making is, "I know that the Antichrist's worldwide kingdom is growing, and it's so fierce and so intense. They're not disrupting My plans at all. They're not intimidating Me! They're not surprising Me! They're not disrupting anything! I'm the One who's allowing them to come to the place of power to serve My purpose."

### **"AN EVIL AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION SEEKS AFTER A SIGN"**

The signs are an assurance. The nation of Israel understood that the signs were an indication that the true Messiah was active and leading and involved in human history. It was for this reason they came to Jesus in Matthew 16:1-4 and said, "We want a heavenly sign" (Mt. 16:1, paraphrased). They were seeking a sign; they wanted a heavenly sign. The logic of it was this: "If You're truly sent from God, the book of Joel 2:10-11 and 2:31, says You can make things happen in the stars. The real Messiah has power over the solar system."

Now, when they said, "We want You to do a sign," when you're first reading it you might think that they wanted Jesus to heal the sick or raise the dead. That's not the sign that they wanted, because the Pharisees and Sadducees said, "Well, maybe the dead man wasn't really dead; maybe he was faking death. Maybe the blind man wasn't really blind. Maybe he walked around for a year and it was a hoax, and You paid him a lot of money and then at the right time, after everyone saw him being blind for a year, duh-duh-duh! His eyes opened! Maybe he wasn't really blind." They said, "We don't want an earthly sign. Maybe You paid them off; maybe it's a hoax. We want a sign that no one can touch. Even Satan can't move the stars around; all the great powers of darkness can't move the heavens around. Only the God-Man, only the Messiah can this."

It was proof of the Messiah being present and active in their midst. They were really just quoting Joel 2:31. They were saying, “The spirit of prophecy, the Holy Spirit, said that when the Messiah came there would be signs and wonders in the heavens. So if You’re the Man, make it happen.”

Of course, Jesus knew that they had an evil, unbelieving heart and that they were only testing Him. He knew that even if He gave them a sign they would find a way to write it off. It says in Matthew 16 that they were testing Him. But that’s what they were doing; they wanted a sign in the heavens. Today the Jewish nation is saying to God, “If the Messiah is actively involved in what’s happening, make signs happen. We want to see His power over the stars!”

That’s going to happen: Messiah Jesus is going to demonstrate His power over the stars and the earthly realm will see it. The prophet of God will speak in the name of Jesus and the stars will do certain things—whatever the Lord has on His mind at that time. These signs won’t just happen in a vacuum; they will transpire when God’s servants on the earth speak them in prayer, like Moses did, and when we say, “In the name of Jesus.”

The miracles in Moses’ generation, the miracles that Moses did (Ex. 7-12) were very astounding. But what was really astounding wasn’t just that the river turned to blood; that would be pretty intense no matter what happened. But it’s doubly intense that when Moses said, “Turn to blood now!” it happened in that instant. That’s a whole different level. I mean, rivers turning to blood are always intense. But when a prophet is standing before the people of God in Israel and the people of God around the world, or even just unbelievers, and says something and points toward the heavenly body, a star, or something in the atmosphere, or calls for an earthquake, and it happens exactly at their word, that’s the part that you can’t miss.

### **THESE COSMIC SIGNS ARE DONE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE**

These signs are linked to the prophetic anointing. We’re going to get to that in a few moments. They’re not just unrelated signs that God does sovereignly from heaven with no involvement with His people. But God does them in cooperation with His prophets and intercessors on the earth declaring them before others, and then as He did with Moses and Elijah. It will shake up everything. It will cause a big hassle for the enemy, in a glorious way.

1 Corinthians 1:22 says that the Jews seek for a sign. If you’re going to win Jewish people to the Lord, you have to operate in signs and wonders, because in their salvation history with God, God always gave them signs. They don’t even have a grid for a true prophet who doesn’t move in signs. They want signs like healings happening right in front of them. And they want signs in the atmosphere above them. They want signs. It’s because of their salvation history in the 4,000 years since Abraham. They don’t have any idea of just stumbling into truth. It says in 1 Corinthians 1:22 that the Gentiles seek through wisdom. We want someone to explain it, and we want to debate it and have logic, and if it makes sense we say, “Well, maybe it’s God.”

But the Jews say, “Away with all that. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of David, the God of Moses and Elijah, does miracles when His prophets speak. We don’t even care about the logic of it, *per se*; if it doesn’t have signs and wonders, we’re not interested in it.”

The Lord says, “Well, that will work.” The Lord is going to give the signs and wonders.

## **TWO THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE COSMIC SIGNS**

I'll do this for the theologians in our midst. If you're not a theologian, you might just go on vacation for three minutes here. Theologically there are two approaches to these cosmic signs. Approach number one, which I think is wrong, is that people read Joel 2:10-11 and make the signs symbolic in order to fit them fully into a past historical event. They read Joel 2 and they know that Joel 2:1-9 is the Babylonian army and Joel 2:10-11 is the signs in the heavens. They say, "Well, that never happened when the Babylonian army invaded Israel. So Joel 2:10-11 must just be symbolic." They make it a symbolic, poetic, statement of God.

"The heavens tremble..." (Joel 2:10).

"Well, the heavens didn't really tremble; God was speaking poetically."

What they're trying to do is fit Joel 2:10-11 fully into a past, historical event: namely the invasion of Israel by the empire of Babylon. In other words, they're downsizing the prophecy. I believe that that's the wrong approach. But many, many scholars and theologians do that. You read the books and nine out of ten of them all but call this "prophetic poetry."

I say, "Bah, humbug! No! That's not what's happening! It's literal! It's real! This isn't just poetry!"

The other way is to go the opposite direction. We make the past historical crisis of the invasion of Babylon a prophetic picture of the end-time drama where the Antichrist's kingdom comes and invades Israel and the fullness of it is fulfilled with cosmic signs. That's upgrading the scale of prophecy instead of downgrading it. We look at the historical crisis of Babylon attacking Israel in 586 BC, and we see that as a prophetic picture of a far greater invasion coming that's completely confirmed with cosmic signs in the heavens. We upgrade the scale of it; we see that it was totally fulfilled. That's the way to read that.

Cosmic signs. Look at the handout. In the book of Joel, there are three different passages that talk about the cosmic signs. In Joel 2:10, Joel introduces cosmic signs. In Joel 2:31, he develops them; that's the most detailed presentation of cosmic signs. That's the one that we're going to focus on.

Notice that these happen before the second coming of Christ. It says that very clearly. They happen before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. These don't happen after the second coming; they happen before the second coming. It's very important to understand that. Joel 3:15-16 repeats what has already been said for emphases. He's saying to the nation of Israel: "You have every right to expect the true Messiah to demonstrate His sovereignty, and His deity, and His power over stars. You have every right to expect of the true Messiah, when He's actively leading in an observable way before the nations, that the people who follow Him, His prophets will speak, and the signs will appear in the sky and in the earth below."

## **AFTER THE TURNING, HE WILL POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT**

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28). I believe that the *afterward* is after the prayer and fasting of Joel 2:17. I believe that the *afterward* goes back to the crisis of Joel 2:1-9 that's met by prayer and fasting in Joel 2:12-17. And then there are the promises of full victory from Joel 2:18-27. After the people of God have said yes to the Spirit of God, after the people of God are in unity and are in partnership with God's heart, then God is going to release His full power. That's what's being said here.

He says, “Afterward...”—and we’ll look at this more in a few weeks when we get to this passage—“I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29).

**“WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED”**

Here is the passage that we’re focusing in on: Joel 2:30-31. “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome”—or terrible—“day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance” (Joel 2:30-32).

That’s a gigantic statement, because Jerusalem is surrounded by a worldwide coalition of nations, an evil empire, about to be utterly annihilated. Joel says, “And by the way, Jerusalem, when you read this passage in the end times, you’ll be delivered!”

I’m sure that when everything mounts up, this will probably be their favorite verse in the Bible. We read it and say, “Well, whatever.”

They say, “Wait! Wait! Back the tape up! What? We’re going to be delivered!” That’s gigantic!

The Lord says, “Among the remnant whom the Lord calls” (Joel 2:32b). There’s a remnant that will be saved in the midst of all this; and everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord, both Jew and Gentile, will be saved. It’s going to result in the great harvest.

**“I WILL SHOW WONDERS IN THE HEAVENS AND IN THE EARTH”**

God says through Joel, “I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth” (Joel 2:30). Remember that the wonders in Joel 2:30 are flowing out of the prophetic decrees of Joel 2:28-29. When the prophet prophesies, as Moses and Elijah did, then the signs appear. The signs don’t appear in a vacuum; they appear at the timing of the Holy Spirit releasing the prophetic decree or the prophetic utterance of His end-time servants.

There will be wonders in the heavens and wonders in the earth. We’re going to look at this in a little more detail. But first I’ll give you a few passages. Cosmic signs in Haggai 2. This is the most all-encompassing passage, which describes five to seven areas, depending on how you want to look at it. It’s five if you read it one way and seven if you read it another. But there are five distinct categories that will be shaken in the end times.

**“I WILL SHAKE ALL NATIONS, AND THEY SHALL COME TO THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS”**

“For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Once more (it is yet a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Hag. 2:6-7). Number one, heaven; number two, earth; number three, sea; number four, dry land; and number five, all nations. Wow. Those are the five categories. He’s going to shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, the dry land, and all nations. The sixth one is the Church, because He’s going to fill it with glory. When the Church is filled with glory, with a new wineskin anointing, it’s going to mess up all the structures of the Church. That’s the sixth, because He’s going to fill His people with glory. It’s going to

mess up everything. What exists today will be so invaded and disrupted by the coming revival that it's true to say that He's shaking the organizations by which the people of God dwell together.

Then lastly He says, "I will give the wealth of the nations" (Hag. 2:9, paraphrased)—meaning, "I will transfer wealth." In other words, there's going to be an economic shaking worldwide. So those are the sixth and the seventh. The Church is going to be shaken to its absolute foundation by the invasion of the glory of God; and then there will be an economic dimension, because He's going to transfer wealth. Whenever wealth transfers from one group to another, that's called a great shaking.

We're going to look at the five specific areas. Notice He says, "I will shake the heavens"—that's the sky and the atmosphere. "I will shake the earth"—that's things like earthquakes. "I will shake the sea"—that's a terrifying idea. Praise God that some people moved from Hawaii. There will be supernatural power in the coastlands, but when God shakes the sea, the coastal cities of the earth will have a time of difficulty. Of course the whole earth will be in difficulty, so there's no sense in trying to escape that. You need to be in the will of God.

Then He's going to shake the dry land; that's in contrast to the earth. That's the vegetation. There will be droughts and famines and pestilence, like the locusts destroying the dry land. It's the vegetation of the earth, not just the earthquake zones and volcanoes. That's what is meant by God shaking the earth. But He's going to shake the actual living parts of the earth as well.

Then He's going to shake all the nations on top of it. Every political institution, all 262 nations, every nation, including the USA, will be shaken. Every nation will be shaken. It's important that you read this in the New Testament. In Hebrews 12:26, an apostolic, prophetically-anointed writer interprets this passage for the end times. The writer of Hebrews, under the anointing of the Spirit, adds some more understanding to this passage in Hebrews 12:26-31.

#### **"I WILL OVERTHROW THE THRONE OF KINGDOMS"**

In Haggai 3, the Lord says, "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, 'I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms'" (Hag. 3:21-22). He's reiterating it: "I will shake the earthly realm and the heavenly realm; I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will shake everything that can be shaken!" That's what He's saying.

#### **"I WILL OVERTHROW THE CHARIOTS AND THOSE WHO RIDE IN THEM"**

Then He goes on to say, "I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them. The horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother" (Hag. 3:22b). It's a disruption of kingdoms; it's the destruction of their equipment and military apparatus. He says, "I will overthrow them. There will be tremendous military crises going on across the earth." It will cause a lot of disruption.

Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 24:7: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Mt. 24:7). There will be so much disruption in all the nations of the earth because of military crisis from one nation to another.

Joel 2:31 is going to fall into these five categories of the shaking. We want to know about this shaking that's coming. Of course tonight our main focus is upon the cosmic shakings in the atmosphere. I just want you to

know that they're coming, and the Lord means business. It's going to be an encouragement; it's going to be a time of supernatural power for God's prophets and the Body of Christ. It's going to be the greatest hour of history. It won't be boring at all. Boredom will be completely a thing of the past.

If you want to add a few more chapters to the categories of shaking, add Isaiah 24-27. It's really intense! Add Isaiah 34, add Isaiah 63, and go ahead and throw in Isaiah 2 and 13. Those are the great shaking of all nations.

### **GREAT EARTHQUAKES, FEARFUL SIGHTS, AND GREAT SIGNS FROM HEAVEN**

Cosmic signs in the teaching of Jesus. Jesus said in Luke 21:11, "There will be great earthquakes ... fearful sights and great signs from heaven" (Lk. 21:11)—meaning in the solar system, up in the weather patterns and the sky. There will be great signs. It won't be like the last time Haley's Comet came, and everyone said, "Well, that's that."

I say, "No, they're going to be very unusual, dramatic signs, fearful signs that cause the entire earth to look up in fear and trembling and say, "This is trouble.""

In the same chapter, Luke 21:25-26, He says, "And there will be signs in the sun" (Lk. 21:25)—this is literal. You don't want to let someone explain this away as just prophetic poetry. This is real. There will be signs in the moon (ibid); God will touch the moon. And I have no doubt that when He does it, some prophet on the earth will predict it in the midst of many people, and then the sign will appear in the moon.

You say, "What kind of sign?" Well, we know one thing: the moon is going to look like blood. We know that. That's one sign; it says it a number of times. Maybe you should start praying now that you could be the man who calls the blood in the moon. I don't know if you get to sign up for this stuff, but it's in the Bible; if you're smart enough to go after it, you never know. The Lord may say, "I was just waiting for one person to believe My Word."

### **THE PERPLEXITY OF NATIONS, THE SEAS AND THE WAVES ROARING**

"Signs in the stars" (Lk. 21:25, paraphrased)—what an interesting statement. "And upon the earth, distress of nations with great perplexity" (ibid)—also very interesting. The nations will be perplexed. They'll say, "We don't know what this means." We'll know what it means, but they won't.

Here we said, "In the name of Jesus!" and the sign will appear in the stars.

They'll still say, "We don't know for sure what that means."

"Well, let's do another star. In the name of Jesus!" And it happens again.

People will be on the sea, and the waves will be roaring (Lk. 21:25). The sea will be completely disrupted. It doesn't mean you need to flee them, but the coastal cities will be disrupted in the last hours of natural history. God will send His apostles and prophets there, so people need to be in the will of God. But the seas will be roaring like never before.

Men's hearts will fail from fear and from the expectation of what's coming (Lk. 21:26). Unbelievers will say, "I don't know what's going on, but I know that it's getting worse." The expectation of worse things happening is going to be upon them.

**"THE POWERS OF THE HEAVENS WILL BE SHAKEN"**

Look at what Jesus says: "The powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Lk. 21:26). When you see "the heavens," think of the weather patterns and the solar system. I have no doubt that it also means the heavenly realms, because we know in Revelation 12:7-12 that there's a war in the heavens, and Satan is cast down out of the mid-heavens and confined to the earth. So we know that it affects the heavenly realm as well. That's Daniel 12:7-12. Our focus is upon the natural heavens, not only the spiritual heavenly realm; but it will affect everything.

**"THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT"**

In Matthew 24:29-30, Jesus says it again. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days"—but before the second coming—"the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Mt. 24:29-30). There it is again. And then in the next verse Jesus appears, so this is before the second coming.

We know from Revelation 6:12-13 that there will be a great earthquake; the sun will turn back, the moon will become like blood, and the stars will fall to the earth. Jesus said that a few times. Stars falling to the earth! I'm thinking, "Hmm... 'falling to the earth'? Now that would be a great one to be just poetry." If you get to pick just one verse that you can turn into poetry, that's the one that I would pick. But I don't think it works that way. I don't like stars falling to the earth. We're going to get a prayer furnace burning and we're going to get a spirit of grace and mercy over a geographic area and say, "Lord!"

At the end of this paragraph here, I have a bunch of other passengers. You want to study this, because this is literal. Don't allow some well-meaning theologian to convince you that this is all poetry. This is real; it's meant to be understood as real. You're supposed to know that it's dramatic. You're supposed to be fascinated by the God who is working out this great drama. You'll be totally fascinated by the God who plans it. It will create a lot of assurance in your heart that He's paying attention and He's demonstrating His power, because these signs and wonders are happening after His prophets speak it and after the prayer rooms release it. It's going to be happening in participation with His people.

We think it's awesome when the blind eye opens or when the man who has been dead a few days rises from the dead. I mean, we like it for the person themselves, although the man who was raised from the dead may say, "Hey, thanks a lot; I was right there in the presence of angels. What did you do that for?" It's hard to say how that works. But we're so excited by the power of God. Think about the level of excitement. Beloved, we're going to be speaking and interceding and affecting stars and the moon and fearful sights in the sky. It's going to get really intense.

**DEEP, DEEP DARKNESS WILL COVER THE EARTH**

Joel 2:30 says there will be wonders in the heavens. The passage beneath it is from Isaiah: "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Is. 60:1). Deep darkness. There will be moral darkness and there will be physical darkness. Deep darkness is going to cover the whole earth. The Lord will turn out the lights on the sun.

Number one: the sun will be turned to darkness. There are all kinds of different signs in the sun. It won't just be a one-time event. There are a number of times that the sun is affected by the power of God in response to the praying Church, to intercession and prophetic decrees, as with Moses and Elijah.

Number two: the moon will be one of the wonders in the heavens. God will do things related to the moon. I don't think the Bible gives every possibility, but rather general categories. I think that there will be all kinds of surprises. It won't be boring. The stars will diminish in their brightness. Some won't have their light.

Third: again, it's the "duck!" verse. The stars are falling to the earth. I say "Duck!" because it's more than them losing their brightness. They're crashing to the earth. This is literal. I hope that they're little stars. I'm really distracted by that one, aren't I? You can tell. I've been thinking about that for years. I say, "Lord, I don't care if they lose their light; just stay in place. Just stay up there and burn out. Just don't come down here!"

Fourth: the sky, the weather patterns, scorching heat, thunder and lightning. There's thundering and lightning all around the throne, but some of the passages describe the thundering and lightning breaking out in the natural. There will be thunder and lightning breaking out in such awesome displays of power in the earth, reflecting what's happening around the throne.

### **BLOOD, FIRE, EARTHQUAKES, AND FALSE SIGNS AND WONDERS**

"Wonders in the earth" is another category. It says "blood." Well, there will be the blood of martyrs. Rivers will be turned to blood like in the days of Moses. There will be the power to turn water into blood. There will be the blood of nations because of God's judgment. Blood is going to be one of the major signs, a supernatural demonstration of power, where blood is flowing at a level that we've never known in history. But it's in the Bible. This isn't going to go away; we need to understand it and begin to flow as the people of God and get ready for this.

Fire. There are many categories of fire. There's more that I didn't put on this handout. I have several categories of smoke also. There will be supernatural smoke erupting out of the bottomless pit. Smoke is going to kill multitudes. One-third of the earth will be killed by smoke and fire and brimstone (Rev. 9:18). Smoke will be an agent that certainly kills a lot of people.

Number four: earthquakes. There are many verses, and I didn't put them all on here. Earthquakes will break out in large numbers all over the earth, in Israel and many other places. But at least one great earthquake will strike the land of Israel.

False signs and wonders. I mean, the Devil himself will have a display of signs going on. There will be true signs and wonders done by the people of God throughout the earth.

### **THERE'S AN ARMY OF PROPHETS BEING RAISED UP AMONGST THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

I want to end with this: there's going to be a release of end-time prophets second to no time in history. Some people say, "Well, the prophets passed away in the early church."

But the book of Revelation talks about "the saints and the prophets." Most often it talks about the saints and the prophets who shed their blood—the saints and the prophets who stayed true to the Lord.

There's an army of prophets being raised up amongst the people of God. The reason that it says "the saints and the prophets" isn't because the prophets are some elite group. What the Lord is saying is that even when the pressure falls, there will be an unusually high number of martyrs. Not the majority of the saints, but an unusually high number.

The Lord says, "Even My favored ones, those with My power, even prophets, will be touched by martyrdom." It's not saying "saints and prophets" to suggest that the prophets are special. The Lord is saying, "Even some of My anointed ones will experience the fullness of the pressure. And some of them will escape it, but even some of the prophets will be killed."

The point that I'm really making is that there are five or six verses here that are emphasizing that prophets will be raised up all over the earth. Some of you in this very room are some of those prophets. It's weak and broken people like us who are these prophets. It's people who need the mercy of Jesus and who have said yes to the grace of God. And the Lord releases His great prophetic end-time anointing.

Amen. Let's stand.

### **MINISTRY TIME**

This ought to give you some discussion. Those of you in the summer teen program, you ought to have plenty of verses to keep you up all night discussing this stuff. I want to encourage you to look up these verses and discuss them in Bible studies and get familiar with them. Don't make it a one-week thing. I mean, literally look them up and get friends together in a home Bible study, or just gather a few people over at your house and say, "Let's talk about these verses. Let's read them all and compare them with one another."

I ask you to close your eyes and not be distracted for a moment. We're going to ask the Holy Spirit to come and rest on us right now. What's on my heart is calling forth those whom the Lord wants to begin to prepare and stir to be prophets, to move in the prophetic arena with understanding and power.

Lord, across this room I ask You to release the fire of Your Spirit even now, a prophetic anointing upon the fifteen-year olds, upon the fifty-year olds. I ask You, Lord, for a prophetic anointing that we might understand the Scriptures and release power to bring them to pass. Lord, we ask for more of You. Lord, we ask for the release of Your Spirit. Abba, come with Your fire! Come, fire of God! Holy Spirit, we invite You as the prophetic Spirit.

Let's lift our voices. Come, fire of God. Here we are, Lord. Here we are, Lord.

You said, "In that day I will pour out My Spirit and they will prophesy." In the name of Jesus, you shall prophesy! And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you. "In that day I will pour out My Spirit! You shall prophesy; you shall testify; My Spirit will come upon you!"

Lord, here we are. I ask You to release Your anointing on us even now. I want to invite anyone to come up who says, "I would like prayer to receive a greater prophetic anointing." You don't have to get prayer for that to happen; the Lord may give it to you directly. But sometimes the Lord uses the prayer of believers to do this. If you're stirred and you would like that, I will ask the others to come and be the prayer team with me. Lord, I ask

You to pour out Your Spirit. Lord, I ask You to pour out Your Spirit even now. Lord, we cry out for Your Spirit. Let Your fire fall! Wind of God, we invite You, even now; even here, Lord, tonight.

I want to invite anyone in the room who moves in the prophetic in any way, whether you're visiting or a part of our staff, to come on up and help us pray for them. We want to lay hands on every one of them.