

Bible Studies for Life: May 8

Watch for Christ's Return • Matthew 24:23-31

By Lee Faler



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Many residents across the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas were caught off-guard last week when they heard a loud boom early Wednesday morning. We were even more surprised when we found out the loud boom wasn't someone blowing up a beaver dam with Tannerite, but instead it was, according to NASA, a meteor!

According to local news WLBT-TV, the meteor was moving around 55,000 mph and broke into fragments as it entered our atmosphere and disintegrated into a swampy area near Minorca, Louisiana. The force of the meteor's impact generated the energy equivalent of three tons of TNT. That's an awfully big boom friends!

While a meteor hitting that close to us may shock us, the return of Christ should not. In fact, Jesus commands us to "watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:13). As we consider watching for Christ's return, I believe Jesus is instructing us to watch for three signs.

First, we should be on guard against false prophets or as some translations say, "false messiahs." Jesus warned the disciples that in the last days there would be those who would come on the scene saying, "Look, here is the Christ" (24:23), and

would even perform great signs and wonders in effort to lead true Believers astray.

Jesus wanted His disciples to be prepared, and we would do well to heed His instructions today. The presence of the mysterious and miraculous are not always indicators of the approval of God. We must remember that even in the days of the Exodus, Pharaoh's magicians were able to replicate some of the signs and wonders that God gave Moses – and those magicians were definitely not from God.

Signs and wonders may appear shiny and attractive but as every fisherman knows, in order to catch a fish you first have to conceal your hook. Could it be that signs and wonders may just be the bait Satan will use to conceal his hook in order to deceive many? May we test every Spirit and hold every teacher to the authority of Scripture.

Secondly, we should watch for the signs from creation. We know that Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and one day creation itself will announce the coming of Christ! Jesus said in Matthew 24:29, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light." What a gloriously wonderful contradiction, friends!

The darkness of this day will be the brightest day imaginable for us as followers of Christ, because the darkness will only serve as the background upon which Christ will return!

As I think on this future event I'm reminded of the day I bought my wife's engagement ring. The salesman took that beautiful diamond ring and placed it on a black velvet background. Boy, did that ring shine in all of its beauty when contrasted against the dark background.

Friends, may we never forget that the diamond shines the brightest against the darkest of backgrounds, and our Jesus will shine the brightest against the darkest of skies.

Finally, we must watch personally for the coming of Christ. I want us to briefly consider two truths as we long for this day. First, for those who have trusted Christ this will be a day of rejoicing beyond all comparison. The Bible says He will personally send out His angels to gather His people unto Himself.

Concerning this day Paul says we will, “meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). What a joyous day that will be, my friends! On that day we will be free from the presence, power, and penalty of sin. All will be made right, and we will be in the presence of the very one who died and rose again to give us victory!

Yet for many this day will be terrible beyond our comprehension. Matthew 24:30 says that “all the tribes of the earth will mourn” when they see Him, yet there will be no comfort available to relieve them from their tears. Their bad days will have only begun.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way! The Gospel is still the power to save anyone and everyone who will believe on Jesus. May the return of Christ fuel our passion and mission for Christ!

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