

Eyes to See

...anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see. Revelation 3:18

What on earth is happening before our eyes? Is it simply more of the same repeating itself throughout history? World news can be depressing. Perhaps, we can ignore it. Or should we be like the Bereans in the Bible, able to discern the times through the lens of God's written Word? Are there clues in the Bible that reveal the nearness of Christ's return? What can be done?

Very real questions, especially in view of what we not only see but sense that is happening...in Israel, in America, and worldwide. Bible believer or not, we should all be able to agree on general world events that are taking place. We may not agree on the causes, but unless we're hiding out in some hundred-foot-deep bunker, we can both see and feel the effects. And it's not the same as in the past. It's not normal and I don't think we are going back.

Birth pangs is how Jesus described the signs that lead up to His return. It's not the fact that we have been seeing these things happening for a long time...such as earthquakes, plagues, famines, wars, etc. It's the increasing frequency and growing intensity with which they are now happening that should be telling us something. Like the baby is on the way. Except in this hour Jesus is not coming back as a baby. He has gone home to His glorified state and been given all authority in heaven and earth. He is coming again as the King of kings and Judge of all to separate the wheat from the tares. This earth is preparing itself for the final judgment. Those who are Christ's are becoming more Christ-like, and those who are lawless are becoming more satanic (unless converted).

What we see taking place on a global scale is at a level like no other time in history. All the prophetic pieces of the puzzle are assembling before our eyes. Along with the increasing pains of wars, earthquakes, famines and diseases, there is the Biblically predicted re-gathering of Israel as a nation, recognized in 1948, still developing. Even more foreshadowing of the end is the political alignment of the nations against the Jews. The setting is screaming and ripe for a world leader to come on the scene offering peace and safety to a war-ravaged land on the verge of nuclear annihilation.

The transition to a final world division of ten powers was predicted by Daniel the Prophet and John the Revelator. Signs indicate that it may be close at hand. The threat of more war and collapse of national currencies is forcing political realignments. Artificial intelligence (A.I.) has become a common term heralding hope with some mixed fears for the future. Unless we know the Word of God and are led by the Spirit, the conveniences and entertainment being offered on our smart phones will be seen as nothing more than scientific rewards to be enjoyed, while the resulting collection of personal data and its ramifications will hardly be noticed. False help and guidance come calling on the unwary, appealing to natural man's lust and greed, at a price of poverty and bondage. It's the devil's playground leading people away from God and into an angry prison-house from which recovery is rare, yet possible through Christ.

News of emergency social controls being implemented by linking our cards and bank accounts to a central bank digital currency will be a chilling announcement to those who are prophetically savvy of the signs leading up to the end-time antichrist. An advancing global agenda will make survival challenging for believers. Some are already prepping with extra food, home gardens and guns. Fear has always been a useful trick of the devil to herd the masses into proverbial cattle cars where they will be of no threat to the ruling intelligentsia. But God has not given us the spirit of fear. He gives His children power, love, and a sound mind. He expects His church to advance, not retreat, and to remain faithful to the end. This requires spiritual vision.

Most of the world can be easily convinced of the need for a world leader, one who is able to still the storm of his own destructive wars, perhaps even exert amazing control over the climate. It shouldn't be surprising to find out how weather manipulation can work given the vast developments in the sciences. Supernatural forces are also readily available to the god of this world who will be in full possession of the final actors of evil. 1 John 5:19 tells us that *the whole world lieth in wickedness.*" Nations and Kingdom powers are warring. Satan is being allowed a leash to carry out an end-time plan. However, the saints can know it in advance and be prepared.

The phrase, *as you see the day approaching*, is found in Hebrews 10:25. It is not a promise that everyone will see, or that we will be able to continually see. But the words do strongly convey the truth that seeing is possible and will take place. This sight is one of two kinds. One is natural. The other is granted by the Holy Spirit. There is a discernment of events and approaching times that goes beyond the natural. Unless one is born again (by the Spirit) he cannot see the Kingdom of God or understand the spiritual things described in the Bible and happening around us. New believers are surprised by the change they experience in perceiving the world. The Bible records an event in 2 Kings 6:17-20 when the prophet Elisha prayed for his servant's spiritual eyes to be opened, and he saw the surrounding hills filled with horses and chariots of fire ready to defend them.

The enemy works to prevent us from gaining spiritual eyesight. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 we are told that the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep

them from seeing the glorious light of the gospel (good news) of Christ. The devil does this by filling our minds with lies which are opposed to the knowledge of God, thus building invisible strongholds and keeping people in a form of prison, powerless to carry out God's plan for their lives. Without a Biblical and Spirit-given frame of reference, man cannot discern truth. Two people can be looking at the same thing and see it differently. They can attach entirely different meanings to it. That is why the world powers work to control propaganda – the control of information, and educational institutions. Truth can tear down their walls and free their prisoners.

The devil's blinded prisoners have been present in these last days scoffing at the truth of history which is recorded in the Bible. This is predicted in 2 Peter 3 that they will be willingly ignorant, eyes and minds closed to the warnings of Scripture and truth of a past world judgment by the God of Creation with waters from above and below. Such a severe flood judgment covered the mountains to a depth near 15 feet which wiped out the entire earth's population of air-breathing men and animals with the sparing of one human family and a 450-foot-long ark of animals. The same Scriptures are willingly ignored which warn that the earth that now exists is *reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*. They are like ostriches with their heads buried in the very sediments that testify to the world-wide flood. Believers can look at the earth's layers knowingly and see how true science supports the Biblical record. If scientific help is needed for such proofs, there are highly credentialed believing scientists that publish convincing evidences for creation and the flood with the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) and Answers in Genesis (AIG). The Bible has no disagreement with true science.

Spiritual discernment is needed in addition to eyesight. Jesus scolded the people for being able to forecast the weather but being unable to recognize the time of His first coming in Luke 12:54-56. We are dutifully reminded that the things that were recorded in the Old Testament were said to be recorded for our benefit, that we do not fall into the same sins and errors as did Israel, largely by unbelief. How can we be sure of seeing the nearness of His return for His Bride if we do not stay ready and watchful? The parable of ten virgins or bridesmaids tells of half of them that were caught by surprise at the return of the groom. The reason given was that they slept and their lamp oil had run out, thus they were shut out of the wedding. This is a sober warning to the church to stay filled with the Holy Spirit and to remain watchful.

In the natural we go to eye-doctors for check-ups to make sure we are seeing properly. Spiritually, the church needs to do the same. Apparently, there was a problem with the church of Laodicea, which is also true of many today. Jesus prescribed spiritual eye-salve that they might see. I will never forget the day that I asked the Lord to open my eyes to the reality of the spirit world.

Early in my Christian walk, after completing the self-study *Design for Discipleship* course by the Navigators, I knew there was more to see and do than what I was experiencing by simply attending Sunday morning church services. I had read in the

Bible about encounters with evil entities but had never heard or witnessed any trace of them within the comfortable American church environment. I guess I had written them off as things that happened in the past and did not need to concern us now. I knew that we were all involved in a spiritual battle within our minds, but there was still a question mark. God was about to open my eyes.

My wife and I had been house-sitting during Christmas at a Christian retreat owned by the Edwards Baking Company on St. Simons Island, Georgia. It once belonged to the Stuckey family, active in Georgia state government, that built all those highway tourist stops by the same name. Later the main house was moved onto a barge and pulled up the intercoastal waterway to a new location in South Carolina. We were staying in the carriage house while the regular missionary housekeepers were on vacation.

One early evening the house phone rang, and I answered. It was a strange and trembling female voice. One I did not know. She said that she needed help and was about to commit suicide. All I could think of was to tell her of God's love by sharing John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world* (which included her), *that He gave His only begotten Son...* I put her name in the verse. She was having difficulty saying it after me, which I asked her to do. As I continued to press her to repeat the verse with her name in it, a different voice interrupted her. It was a growling and snarling sound that emanated disgust, with hate-filled words that completed the verse and claimed to have heard it a thousand times. It was startling and was my first such encounter with the demonic. I had never heard of such a thing happening over the phone.

Fortunately, God was in control. The girl's normal voice returned, and I was able to get her to call a friend of mine who was a street preacher. I picked up another friend, a strong prayer warrior, and went over to his house on St. Simons Island. We prayed while he ministered to the girl on the phone. It was a tremendously eye-opening experience for all of us as we heard the multiple spirit entities obeying the commands to leave in Jesus Name. It took several hours into the night before the girl was able to confess her sins of witchcraft and ask Jesus to be her Lord and Savior. Finally, a real peace came and all she wanted was for us to read the Bible to her. Later, we were able to connect her with a ladies Bible study which helped her to grow in the Lord. I tried to sleep that night, but my eyelids would not close.

Witchdoctors are not respectable in the United States (yet), but witchcraft seems to be, thanks to Harry Potter and a society that has turned away from God and the Bible. As lawlessness increases in the last days, the devil will come out of hiding to the surprise of many churchgoers who have been taught that such things were just Biblical ways of referring to psychological disorders. With the increased use of drugs, it was bound to break out in the open. We can't keep sending addicts off for treatments that don't work. They're crowding our sidewalks, camping out in our yards, and beating on our doors. When will the church recognize the spiritual problem and confront it with the compassion and authority of Jesus to set the prisoners free?

It can be disturbing to the ecclesiastical authority when a demonic challenge takes place within a structured, orderly service. Counseling and medication will not hold it in check. Unless the members of Christ's body have read and believed the Bible for themselves, the manifestation of a demon can go unnoticed or be explained away as an angry outburst. In a self-centered society, rude antics are common. Deliverance is not usually on the table as an option. However, much of what we see in the realm of abnormal psychology relates to the spiritual and can be treated as Jesus did. His words to the believer are still true – *The works that I do, you shall do also...* Devils will stay around if not confronted. When commanded to go in the name of Jesus, people suddenly see, wake up, and believe.

The likelihood of death can serve to open spiritual eyes, but that may be too late with the opportunity for salvation gone. While being stoned to death for his declared faith in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, Stephen looked up and his eyes were opened to see his Savior standing in the glory of heaven. No doubt such a vision, invisible to the crowd, served to strengthen his final faith and usher him into the waiting arms of his Lord. For Stephen, as with the penitent thief on the cross, salvation had come in time. Today, most have placed faith within an intellectual framework for later consideration. But God warns people that *today is the day of salvation*, not tomorrow. Jesus tells the end-time church of Laodicea to stop being lukewarm, to go buy some eye-salve to spiritually see. Do whatever it takes. You will have eternity to be thankful.

Those who know their God will be *strong* and accomplish great things - *do mighty exploits*, according to Daniel the prophet. Those could be the *greater works* promised by Jesus to the faithful. Knowing God is key to seeing and following His directions. How can we grow in the knowledge of Holy God and to behold His glory? Is it even possible this side of heaven? We can start by purifying our heart. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. Since we are separated from Him by our sins, we can confess them and be cleansed according to His promise in 1 John 1:9. Jesus did not shed His blood for us to wallow in our sins, or to keep returning to them as a dog to its vomit. As a loving Father, God urges us to draw near to Him through Christ and He will draw near to us. If a son asks his earthly father for a fish, will he get a stone? How much more certain we can be that our heavenly Father will grant our request if it helps in our relationship with Him.

Don't give up seeking and asking – persevere! God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Desire Him above all else. He keeps His promises, unlike men who break theirs. He says that when we truly seek Him with all our heart, we will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). Get into His inspired Word. It gives Spirit and Life. In the light of His Word, we can see the light of His glory. Confess the common sins of apathy and complacency. Hunger for truth and revelation. The hungry inherit. Much of the church is too restrained by the lies of the enemy. They come from the world (public media), the flesh (selfish desires), and the Devil (demonic whispers and false guidance). Some say, "You shouldn't try that. It will fail. You will look stupid. You will lose friends." We forget that Jesus said that His way is narrow, and few find it. The broad way is the popular way

which attracts the crowds, but it leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). Truth is not found or determined by a majority vote. The world does not act through eyes of faith in God's Word. For those who do, nothing is impossible.

There is a restrainer, especially relating to the last days (2 Thessalonians 2); but he is holding back evil, not the church. When that mystery restrainer is removed, the Antichrist, that final man of sin, will be revealed and allowed to accomplish great evil. But until that time, the church can still be active even though an apostasy and falling away will be taking place. While speculation on who that one could be is popular, it is largely a waste of time since God has not yet revealed him. We need more than ever to be looking unto Jesus and to the fields that are still white unto harvest – souls in the valley of decision. We need eyes and hearts to see the lost – those without hope, heading for a Christless eternity.

Once a person receives by faith the righteousness, peace, and joy of God's spiritual kingdom which Jesus declared to be within the born-again believer, they can see. Until that happens the kingdom presence of Jesus Christ is missing, perhaps a distant hope, but not yet realized. Jesus may be knocking at the heart's door, but until it is opened to Him, He will not enter. What glorious fellowship awaits when He does.

I have asked some behind bars if they were to die that night, would they know if they were going to heaven. The common reply is they will have to wait and see. Some add that they need to get their life straightened out first, as if they had the power to do that apart from the Holy Spirit. They have swallowed a lie of the devil, that there can be no assurance of heaven in this life. God refutes that in 1 John 5:13 – *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* How many go through this life with head cast down, without the eyes of the Spirit to see their heavenly Father. A simple prayer can be all it takes to receive new life – *God, be merciful unto me, a sinner.*

Death is not a friend. Jesus said that it is the last enemy to be destroyed. Those who turn to Jesus now will only pass through that dark valley once and into the presence of the Savior. Those who reject the offer of life eternal through God's Son will die twice to a fate far worse in payment for their own sins. *All have sinned and the wages for sin is death* (Romans 3:23, 6:23). Don't take this author's word for it. Read the truth for yourself. It is the God-breathed and preserved Word of God to mankind. It is not God's will that any perish, but we must each choose life or death. To see life, we must choose it. And there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved than Jesus (Acts 4:12). Deception will be great in the last days. God has given us His Word that we may see the truth.

The importance of seeing God as the good and loving Father that He is, cannot be overstated. It affects who we are. There are verses in the Bible that speak of our perception of God. The malignment of God's character was the lie that led to man's fall. Satan questioned God's fairness to Eve after disputing His words (Genesis 3). If we see God as perfect love (*God is love*), love will shape our lives and finally embrace us after

bringing us through the trials of this world. But if we see God as a cruel tyrant that is wanting to condemn us for our failures, such a twisted concept can be used by the agents of Satan to keep us from seeking to know God better and growing closer to Him. The demons know that once Christ's authority is known by us, we then can expel the darkness and give them the boot. Rid of their lies, we are free to receive the joy, peace, and guidance that God intended for us. Hell was created for the Devil and his angels, not man; but men can be led away from God.

Jesus illustrated this truth in a parable He told of a householder who went on a long journey and left various potential investments with his servants. Upon his return, the servants were summoned to report on how they had used what he had given them during his absence. Most had done well; but one servant had hidden his investment and done nothing with it. The reason given was because he viewed the householder as a hard man who took things unfairly, expecting him to take it all back anyway. The very thing the servant feared happening wound up happening. While the other servants were rewarded for their faithful investments, the servant with a wrong view of his householder had his talent taken away (Matthew 25: 14-30).

While it is accurate to view Satan as man's adversary and a spiritual thief that comes only to steal, kill and destroy, we must not lose sight of our sovereign God who's ways are beyond our finite understanding and who's power is absolute. We need to learn from Job who continued to praise God even through terrible sufferings and was greatly rewarded in the end. Why a loving Father allows His children to go through such trials is hard sometimes to understand, but we can trust Him to be doing what is best – *We can know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28).

Does God want us to see things coming before they happen? According to Amos, the prophet, He does - *Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets* (Amos 3:7). Can we expect the same kind of revelation concerning the end times and the coming Day of the Lord? Yes, if we have ears to hear and eyes to see. Like night-vision goggles.

On the day of the eclipse, April 8th, 2024, thousands were tightly gathered along the path of totality with protective eye shields, gazing up at the spectacular event. Being well outside the path of total darkness in Brunswick, Georgia, I watched a replay on NBC news that highlighted the crowds' reactions and comments of William Shatner (Star Trek's Captain Kirk). The more he spoke, the more it sounded as if he was describing God – giving attributes to the sun and the moon that belong to the Creator. It began to seem strange, as there were those present shrieking with awe and even lifting their arms as we do in praise. It was like seeing sun worshippers. The more he spoke, the more emotion with tears he expressed, with worshipful language. Encouraged to continue by the NBC commentator, Shatner went on like the high priest of the Starship Enterprise, describing the marvelous wonders of the universe.

Through it all, there was a disturbing absence. It was any mention of God. Not one line of credit was given to the all-powerful, glorious Creator who has made Himself *clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead* (Romans 1:20). Did Shatner not see God? Does he not have eyes to see? I was saddened by the thought that many in the crowds, while impressed with the eclipse, were seeing little more than a fireworks display. I know that most of our public media, like our schools of “higher” education, have policies in place that try to prevent the mention of God, so NBC’s part was no surprise; but it hurt to see people reaching out to the creation while ignoring the cross of Jesus Christ, which could open their spiritual eyes and satisfy their hearts’ desire.

I do not speak down to those who may still be in the path of totality. I was there myself for a long time, searching for meaning in a beautiful and complex world. If God had not drawn me by His Spirit, I would not have recognized Him. There is far much more to see, and Christ alone deserves our worship.

Chapter 1 – Questions & Scripture for Discussion

1. Why do people see the same things differently?
2. What prevents some people from gaining spiritual understanding?
3. Why is it important to have spiritual discernment?
4. What will mockers be saying in the last days about the return of Jesus Christ?
5. Why is our perception of God important?
6. Why is our perception of Satan important?
7. What do you think is meant by eye-salve (Revelation 3:18)?

Scriptures on spiritual vision: 2 Kings 6:17; Job 42:5; Matt 5:8; John 14:19; Heb 11:27; Acts 7:55; Heb 12:2