

# Matthew 24:29 Commentary

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## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)

Click chart to enlarge

**Matthew 24:29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken:**

Greek: Eutheos de meta ten thlipsin ton hemeron ekeinon ho helios skotisthesetai (3SFAI) kai he selene ou dosei (3SFAI) to. peggos autes kai hoi asteres pesountai (3PFMI) apo tou ouranou kai. ai dunameis ton ourann saleuthesontai (3PFAI):

**KJV** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

**NET** "Immediately after the suffering of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

**NLT** "Immediately after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

**CJB** "But immediately following the trouble of those times, the sun will grow dark, the moon will stop shining, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in heaven will be shaken.

**CSB** "Immediately after the tribulation of those days: The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the celestial powers will be shaken.

- **Immediately after the tribulation of those days:** Mt 24:8 Da 7:11,12 Mk 13:24,25
- **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky:** Isa 13:10 24:23 Jer 4:23-28 Eze 32:7,8 Joe 2:10,30,31 3:15 Am 5:20 8:9 Zep 1:14,15 Lu 21:25,26 Ac 2:19,20 Rev 6:12-17
- **The powers of the heavens will be shaken:** 2Pe 3:10

## COSMIC SIGNS SIGNAL SECOND COMING

The parallel passage in Mark 13:24-27 (there is no true parallel passage in Luke 21) has

"But in those days, **after that tribulation**, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT." AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. "And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory. "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.

**E Donald Hiebert** commenting on the Mark version of the Olivet Discourse writes "Bruce remarks that it sets a contrast between "the false Christs who are not to be believed in" and "the coming of the true Christ." The double statement, "**in those days, after that tribulation**," suggests a close connection with Mk 13:14-23. The implied close connection is explicitly affirmed by Matthew's "**immediately**" (Mt 24:29). The demonstrative pronouns, **those** and **that**, view the unparalleled tribulation just described as still

remote at the time of speaking." ([The Gospel of Mark- An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Allison and Davies** comment that "Having, in Mt 24:28, moved the mind's eye from earth to sky, the text now directs our gaze even higher. This imaginative raising of vision leaves distress behind and prepares for envisaging the good help that comes from heaven (Mt 24:30)." (A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew)

**Thomas Ice** - One of the original questions that the disciples ask Jesus at the beginning of this discourse was "what will be the sign of your coming?" He has been answering the question since Matthew 24:23. Having spoken of His coming in Matthew 24:27, Jesus now builds upon His previous point that He will not arrive clandestinely, but His return will be a clear, public event that will take place suddenly. Just such a glorious appearing is exactly what is described in Matthew 24:29-30. ([Matthew 24:29 The Sun, Moon, and Stars](#))

**David L McKenna** - When the sign of His coming is given (**Ed**: He is referring here especially to the cosmic cataclysms), it will defy scientists and pseudoscientists, astronomers and astrologers, but there will be no way to misread its purpose." ([The Communicator's Commentary](#))

**Jesus** is quoting in part from Isaiah 13 (but see the numerous passages at end of this note that have similar descriptions of this time) which in context describes the coming **Day of the LORD**

Behold, the **Day of the LORD** is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light. The sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light." (Isaiah 13:9-10)

The great **Day of the LORD, near and coming very quickly**. Listen, the **Day of the LORD!** In it the warrior cries out bitterly. 15 A **Day** of wrath is that **Day**, A **Day** of trouble and distress, A **Day** of destruction and desolation, A **Day** of darkness and gloom, A **Day** of clouds and thick darkness, (Zep 1:14,15)

**But (de)** - This is a **term of contrast** which should always prompt the question of "What is the author contrasting?" Notice that in this context most of the translations leave the Greek word "de" (but) untranslated.

**David Turner** - This is the period of ultimate, unparalleled anguish (lit. "tribulation") described in 24:15ff (cf. Dan 12:1). (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 11: Matthew and Mark)

**John Phillips** - The signs of the Lord's return will not be lying signs such as those produced by the beast and his wizard prophet. There will be awesome signs, shaking heaven above and earth beneath, (Exploring the Gospel of Matthew)

**Stuart Weber** - The Messiah's coming will be accompanied by supernatural manipulations of celestial bodies—or at least manipulations of their appearance, or their ability to give light. These signs in the sky will be such that all people of earth can see them and realize that the Messiah is coming. If only one of these, signs were given, it might be explained away as an eclipse or a meteor shower. But all of them together can be caused only by the hand of God. The second coming of Christ to establish his kingdom on earth will be a majestic event that will extend over many hours. The earth and its occupants will be forced to watch, amazed, as the armies of the hosts of heaven descend to the earth in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4). (Holman New Testament Commentary)

## **WITHOUT FURTHER ADO!**

In Mt 24:29 Jesus jumps to the very end of **Daniel's Seventieth Week**. And in plain English, **immediately** means at once, instantly, without any intervening time. Forthwith. Straightaway. Right away. Here and now. Without delay. Let the text say what it says -- "**immediately after the tribulation**" means exactly what you think it means (regardless of the fact that a number of erudite expositors try to twist Jesus' words saying they don't really mean what they appear to mean).

In the entertainment world the phrase "**without further ado**" signifies that it is time for the featured performer, of the headliner if you will, the appearance of the one everyone is eager to see. And so **without further ado** the Father will send His precious Son, the true star, the Bright Morning Star, Who will appear to a dark world reeling from the final pouring out of God's righteous wrath, bringing that terrible time of tribulation to an abrupt termination! (cf "cut short" Mt 24:22). What tribulation? Well, if English words mean anything and context is king in interpretation, Jesus is clearly referring to the "great tribulation" He has just described in Mt 24:21. A simple reading of His words could not be plainer. To try to make any other sense out of His words is nonsense! The problem with many of the commentaries is that they have a certain theological persuasion which in essence causes them to eschew (deliberately avoid) and/or ignore a plain reading of the text because to do so would disturb their particular systematic theological and eschatological interpretation. So as you read Matthew 24, seek first the teaching of the Spirit of truth before you seek the

thoughts of men (including the thoughts you are reading in my comments!) He alone inspired Matthew to pen these words and He alone can lead you into all the truth!

**McNeile** (1915) commenting on Mt 24:29 and the word **immediately** (**eutheos**) says "This is true sequel of Mt 24:15f., 19-22; the **thlipsis** is that of Mt 24:21, the climax of the "Pangs" being followed immediately by the End. In Mark 13:24-27 (**'but in those days, after that tribulation'**) both the tribulation and the Parousia are in **"those days,"** i.e. they are successive events in the same period and **alla** ("but" - [Strong's 235](#)) adds a note of encouragement: the tribulation will be terrible (Mt 24:14-20), but the Parousia will follow at once. Convulsions of the heavenly bodies, normally so unerring in obedience to God's laws, were a standing feature of Hebrew eschatology (Isa 13:10, 24:21, 23, 34:4, Jer 4:23, Ezek 32:7ff, Joel 2:10, 30ff, Amos 5:20, Zeph 1:15, Hag 2:6, 21, cf 2Pe 3:12, Rev 6:12ff). ([The Gospel according to St. Matthew](#))

**Robert Gundry** on **immediately** - **"Immediately"** denies a temporal gap between "the affliction of those days" and the celestial disasters that will accompany the Son of Man's publicly visible coming. The two occurrences of **"and then"** put those disasters and that coming in the same time frame. **They'll take place concurrently.** The celestial disasters provide a dark backdrop against which the glory of the Son of Man's coming will shine all the brighter. These disasters will feature a darkening of our primary luminaries, the sun and the moon. Jesus doesn't say what will darken them, so that the point lies solely in the contrast between their darkening and the glory of the Son of Man's coming, a glory emphasized with "much." (Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation, Hendrickson Publishers, 2010)

**David Turner** on **immediately** - This is the period of ultimate, unparalleled anguish (lit. "tribulation") described in 24:15ff (cf. Dan 12:1). (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 11: Matthew and Mark)

**Thomas Ice** on **immediately** - Moulton and Milligan, in examples from the Greek papyri, emphasize that the use of this word means "at once." Since "an adverb usually modifies the verb closest to it," **immediately** relates directly to the verb "to darken." Thus, the events of Matthew 24:29 will follow the tribulation **immediately**, at once, without any other events intervening, or without a time delay. This would mean within the expanded chronology of the events of the tribulation found in Revelation 4-19, that Matthew 24:29-31 will follow immediately the final bowl judgment found in Revelation 16:17-21. This explains the parenthetical warning in the next-to-the-last bowl judgment which reads as follows: "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame" (Revelation 16:15). It won't be long from the time in which the sixth bowl judgment takes place, until Christ returns. Revelation 17-18 is an overview of the judgment upon Babylon, which surveys items that will take place throughout the tribulation and second coming. Thus, from a chronological aspect in Revelation, Revelation 16 is followed in time by Revelation 19. ([Matthew 24:28-29 Corpses and Vultures](#))

**James Morison** - This word **immediately** has been a perfect rack of torture to such expositors as have lost their way in the interpretation of the chapter....The whole difficulty arises from assuming that the tribulation of those days has reference to the tribulation that was to be experienced in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem. (See Matthew 24:16-21.) There is not however the slightest necessity for making such an assumption. There is every reason indeed for rejecting it, ...This great mistake is founded on an unwarrantably narrow view of the Saviour's aim in His discourse in general, and on an inappropriately microscopic way of peering toward telescopic objects. ([A Practical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew](#))

**C H Spurgeon** on Mt 24:29-30 - These verses must apply to the Coming of the King at the last great day, we must regard Christ's words here as prophetic of the final manifestation of the "Son of Man coming in the clouds."

**Immediately** ([2112](#))(**eutheos** from **euthus** = straight, immediate) is an adverb which generally means at once, right away, forthwith, straightaway, without an interval of time or a point of time subsequent to a previous point of time. Note that the actual interval of time depends on the nature of the events and the manner in which the sequence is interpreted by the writer. **Eutheos** is a "time sensitive" word (see **expression of time**) and should prompt questions like "To what time does it refer?" or "What happens in this time?"

**Eutheos** - 36x in 36v all but one use (shortly) translated "immediately" - Matt 4:20, 22; 8:3; 13:5; 14:22, 31; 20:34; 21:2; 24:29; 25:15; 26:49, 74; 27:48; Mark 7:35; Luke 5:13; 12:36, 54; 14:5; 17:7; 21:9; John 5:9; 6:21; 18:27; Acts 9:18, 20, 34; 12:10; 16:10; 17:10, 14; 21:30; 22:29; Gal 1:16; Jas 1:24; 3 John 1:14; Rev 4:2

**Note:** Be aware of the fact that the **King James Version** is translated from the [Textus Receptus](#), which has over 80 uses of **eutheos** in the NT including 40 in the Gospel of Mark. However, most of the more modern translations (NAS, ESV) use the [Nestle-Aland \(Novum Testamentum Graece\)](#) as their Greek source which has only 36 uses of **eutheos** including only one in Mark (Mark 7:35). **NAS** has 40 uses of the word **"immediately"** in Mark's Gospel but all (except Mk 7:35) are a translation of the Greek word **euthus**. **Ralph Earle** comments that "This reflects the main characteristic of Mark's Gospel—rapid action. Whereas John gives us in his Gospel a studied portrait of Jesus, the lines of which were drawn with loving care after a long lifetime of meditating on his Lord, and Matthew and Luke give us a series of colored slides, Mark presents a moving picture of Jesus' life. Most verses of the first

chapter begin with "and," plus the fact that euthus occurs no less than 11 times here. We see Jesus moving rapidly from one scene of action to another." (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

Here are the parallel descriptions in **Mark** and **Luke** describing this tumultuous time...

But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory. (Mark 13:24-26)

And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. (Luke 21:25-27)

**The tribulation** - The definitive article ("the") is present in the Greek text and serves to mark this as a reference not to **tribulation**, distress or affliction in general but to the specific **tribulation**. In context Jesus has just described the coming unprecedented time of the **Great Tribulation** (Mt 24:21-note) which is "set in motion" when the **abomination of desolation** stands in the holy place (Mt 24:15-note).

This time of **tribulation** clearly parallels Daniel 9:27 when the **Antichrist**

will make a firm covenant with the many (nation of Israel) for one week (Seven Years = **Daniel's Seventieth Week**), but in the middle of the week (3.5 years = 1260 days = 42 months = Time, times, half a time) he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate." (See commentary)

**Paul's** description of the **Antichrist** in the Temple clearly parallels "**the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place**" (Mt 24:15-note)

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the **Day of the Lord**) will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed, the **son of destruction**, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the Temple of God (cf "the holy place" = Mt 24:15-note), displaying himself as being God. (2Thes 2:3-4-note)

**Tribulation** (2347) (thlipsis from thlibo = to crush, press together, squash, hem in, compress, squeeze in turn derived from thlĀjo = to break) originally expressed sheer, physical pressure on someone. **Thlipsis** is a strong term which does not refer to minor inconveniences, but to real hardships. Medically **thlipsis** was used of the pulse (pressure of the blood against the vessel wall). **Thlipsis** describes a pressing together as grapes as when they are crushed beneath a heavy weight. According to the ancient law of England, those who willfully refused to plead guilty, had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and were pressed and crushed to death, a gruesome picture of a literal thlipsis.

**When will these events take place?** If one compares the OT passages and passages in the Revelation, it is clear that Jesus is describing the events in the book of the Revelation where John begins his description of this time, a time which is known as the **Day of the LORD**. These awesome, fearful cosmic disturbances are like a great "**divine drum roll**" preparing the world for the **parousia** of the **King of kings** which the King Himself describes in Mt 24:30-note and His bondservant John describes in Revelation 19:11-16-note.

**Michael Wilkins** - The phrase "immediately after the distress of those days" (Mt 24:29) introduces a temporal sequence: The Son of Man will come after that time of tribulation. Here "distress" (thlipsis) connects with Mt 24:21 to point to a specific period of great tribulation. The adverbial expression "**immediately after**" emphasizes that the celestial signs and the coming of Jesus will occur after the time of "great distress" just described in Mt 24:15-28.....those who see these events occurring at **the end** suggest that one must "**wildly spiritualize**" (Toussaint, Behold the King, 266) these events in order to see them as occurring at the fall of Jerusalem (**Ed**: 70AD). Once again, the mixture of prophecy referring to both the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the age should be acknowledged. Although the judgment that will be brought on Israel in A.D. 70 with the fall of Jerusalem does seem to be in Jesus' mind (cf. Mt 23:37-39; Luke 21:20-24), the primary emphasis rests on the end of the age when He will come as the Son of Man in great universal power. (The NIV Application Commentary)

**Hendriksen** comments that "The picture is very vivid. While the earth is drenched with the blood of the saints in the most terrible tribulation of all time, all at once the sun becomes darkened. Naturally the moon now also ceases to give her light. The stars deviate from their orbits and race to their doom; they "fall from heaven." The powers of the heaven are shaken. Terrifying sounds are heard. There is "the roaring of the sea and the billows," causing perplexity among men. People faint with fear and with foreboding of what is beginning to happen to the world (Luke 21:25, 26). In connection with this apocalyptic picture strict literalness must be avoided. Until

this prophetic panorama becomes history we shall probably not know how much of this description must be taken literally and how much figuratively." (Baker NT Commentary)

## THE "FORMIDABLE, UNCOMFORTABLE" PROBLEM INTERPRETING MATTHEW 24:15ff AS FULFILLED IN 70AD

**IF** one interprets the **abomination of desolation standing in the holy place** (Mt 24:15-note) as the future Antichrist standing in the Temple (cp 2Thes 2:3-4-note) and initiating the **Great Tribulation**, **THEN** Mt 24:29 makes perfect chronological sense. The Antichrist has only 42 months (3.5 years - Rev 13:5-note) to exercise world domination. **Immediately** (Mt 24:29) after this tribulation the Lord will return and **"cut short"** this horrible time (Mt 24:22-note). Those commentators who hold that Mt 24:15-20 was fulfilled in 70AD have difficulty in making Mt 24:29 fit with their interpretation.

**R T France** explains the problem Mt 24:29 for those who like himself espouse a 70AD fulfillment for the **abomination of desolation** in Mt 24:15-note:

It is with Mt 24:29 that the traditional interpretation (**Ed**: Mt 24:15 = 70AD fulfillment) becomes **most uncomfortable**. If it is agreed that Mt 24:15-28 relate to the siege of Jerusalem (apart from the aside about its difference from the parousia in Mt 24:27) and if it is assumed that Mt 24:29-31 describe the "parousia and the end of the age" (even though they use none of those terms), the opening phrase **"But immediately after the distress of those days"** constitutes a **formidable problem** unless one is prepared to argue that Jesus (and Matthew) really did expect the parousia to take place in the late first century AD, and that He was mistaken (**Ed**: Which of course would make Jesus a false prophet!). As a result many interpreters resort to **imprecise talk** about "prophetic perspective" which merges far distant events into a single time-frame, while others argue that either **"immediately after"** or **"those days" do not mean what they appear to mean** (The Gospel of Matthew, NICNT, Eerdmans Publication, 2007) (**Bolding and italics** mine for emphasis)

**Comment:** The most incredible statement by France is that **immediately after or those days may not mean what they appear to mean!** Beloved, **IF** we have to read the Scriptures trying to discern when words or phrases might **NOT** mean what they appear to mean, we would encounter tremendous problems in reaching a consensus on **ANY PASSAGE!** The point is that Jesus said it plainly and that plainly settles it! He spoke in easily understandable words which can be taken at "face value" and which can therefore be accurately interpreted! If the plain **sense** of Jesus' words in context makes good **sense**, then the reader is wise not to try to come up with an unnatural ("*imprecise*") **sense** or it may end up precisely as **nonsense**. Surely Jesus did not intend that only those with theological doctorates would be able to understand His words. After all He was addressing **"uneducated and untrained men!"** (Acts 4:13) So let us seek the plain **literal** sense and make sure we do so in **context** (see Carson's example of taking a text out of its context below).

Here is **Craig Keener's** interpretation of **"immediately"** in Mt 24:29:

**"Immediately"** ties the tribulation of **"those days"** to the unidentified final tribulation, a tribulation that may follow it by only a few years (as some of Matthew's audience could still have held) or, on a more modern reading, can only be identified as the final one by the fact that the parousia concludes it. (The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary)

**Comment:** Keener who interprets Mt 24:15 as fulfilled in 70AD is to be commended for keeping the door open to the possibility that Mt 24:29 could be referring to a future event.

**Grant Osborne** summarizes the interpretations of **"immediately after the tribulation of those days"**...

(1) Some (France) believe this is a reference entirely to the destruction of Jerusalem, so that the return of Christ here is not His Second Coming but His vindication in the events of AD 66-70.

(2) Others (Carson, Blomberg, Morris) believe this goes back to the "tribulation" of Mt 24:9, 22 and not the "abomination" of Mt 24:15-21 (i.e., the destruction of Jerusalem) (**Ed comment:** Note the inconsistency of this view -- Mt 24:21 is the nearest previous mention of **"tribulation!"** and yet these writers basically ignore it or "skip over it" because a literal rendering in context would mean Christ returns **immediately after** the Great **Tribulation**, which is **"cut short"** [Mt 24:22] by His parousia!), and "immediately after" means that the parousia follows the period of "tribulation" during the church age. (**Ed comment:** To equate the church age with the "great tribulation" is patently absurd! If that were what Jesus meant, why did He use **five verses** [Mt 24:16-20] to give an urgent call to Jews [not the church - cf use of Jewish words "Judea," "Sabbath"!]) to flee?)

(3) Still others (Hagner) believe this is stated from Matthew's perspective as **"immediately"** following the destruction, but with **"immediately"** meaning "it is to be expected after" rather than "very soon after" because of the constant aspect of delay in chs.



24-25. (**Ed comment:** Notice how one is forced to read into the plain sense of the word "immediately" some other meaning in order to justify a "preteristic" interpretation of Matthew 24. The word immediately means just that - immediately! cp the next use by Matthew - Mt 26:49. If Jesus had meant "it is to be expected after" He could have said "after that" or "then" but instead He used "immediately!")

(4) However, to link this just with the destruction of AD 66-70 or with the suffering of the entire church age is to miss the whole context of vv. 4-28. The best understanding is to take **"the tribulation of those days"** as recapitulating **"those days"** of Mt 24:19, 22 and thus refers both to **"those days"** of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the final conflagration of the "great tribulation" (Mt 24:21; Rev 7:14) period. Here with *eutheos* (retaining its force as **"immediately,"** unlike Mark) it especially refers to the final events of history, those **"immediately"** preceding the return of Christ (so McNeile, Grundmann, Hill, Gundry, Bruner, Wilkins, Witherington, Turner). (**Ed comment:** If one ) (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT IN INTERPRETATION OF "THOSE DAYS"

**D A Carson** says that

Matthew 24:29 begins the new stage with **"Immediately after the distress [thlipsis] of those days,"** a clear reference back to the thlipsis of Mt 24:9, 22, not to the "great distress" of Mt 24:15-21. Thus the celestial signs and the coming of the Son of Man do not immediately follow "the abomination that causes desolation" but "the distress of those days"—i.e., of the entire interadvent period of thlipsis." ([Ref](#))

**Comment:** Notice that **Carson** basically ignores the plain meaning of the word **immediately** and does not interpret **"immediately after the tribulation (thlipsis)"** as referring to **immediately** after **"the great tribulation (thlipsis)"** which Jesus had just mentioned in **context**. Instead Carson skips the near reference to **tribulation** in Mt 24:21 and goes back to **tribulation (thlipsis)** in Mt 24:9 in an attempt to buttress his interpretation!

**Why does he avoid the critically important hermeneutical rule of interpreting the text in its context?** I cannot read his mind, but one thing is clear. If Jesus' words in Mt 24:29 are interpreted as a description of the cosmic signs which **immediately** follow the **"great tribulation (thlipsis)"**, then Carson's interpretation of **"the abomination that causes desolation"** would be incorrect because these cosmic signs of Mt 24:29 clearly did not occur after the Roman Army destroyed and desolated Jerusalem in 70 AD! Clearly a literal, contextually sensitive reading of Mt 24:29 creates a significant problem for the popular "preteristic" interpretation of Mt 24:15ff as fulfilled in 70AD!

So without explanation, Carson somewhat dogmatically draws the conclusion that Jesus' statement about **tribulation** is "a **clear reference** back to the **thlipsis** of Mt 24:9,22, not to the great distress of Mt 24:15-21." (Emphasis mine) Notice that he references Mt 24:22, which begs the question **"What is the context of Mt 24:22?"** Note that in the original Greek text Mt 24:22 is linked with Mt 24:21 by use of the **copulative conjunction** (joins words and sentences) **kai** ("and"), which is the first word in the Mt 24:22. It is therefore very clear that Jesus intends for Mt 24:21 and Mt 24:22ESV to be understood as related to or "coupled with" one another. It also logically follows that **"those days"** in Mt 24:22 is clearly linked to the period of **the great tribulation** Jesus had just described in Mt 24:15-21 (See Jesus' three uses of **"those days"** below)!

In sum, the phrase **"immediately after the tribulation of those days"** in Mt 24:29 clearly refers to the **days** Jesus had just designated as the **great tribulation**. To make **"those days"** refer all the way back to Mt 24:9 is tantamount to **"yanking"** Jesus' words out of **context**!

**Allison and Davies** rightly recognize that "The attempt of Carson, pp. 504-5, to refer Mt 24:29a to Mt 24:9 and Mt 24:22 but not Mt 24:15-21, **does not persuade**, in part because he must unnaturally separate Mt 24:22 (with its use of **those days**) from Mt 24:21. (**Ed:** In other words Allison and Davies agree that Dr Carson's handling of the **context** is a bit **strained** or **hermeneutically awkward**.) (Ibid)

Beloved, it is critically important to emphasize that context is **King** if one seeks to **interpret** the Scripture accurately. So let's look again at the context of the important time phrase **"those days"** which is found only 3 times in Mt 24:1-34. Read the following passages and see if it is not very clear as to what time period Jesus is referring when He uses **"those days."** You will notice that the two previous uses of **those days** both refer to the time period Jesus called the **great tribulation**. And so to reiterate, it clearly follows that the phrase **immediately after the tribulation of those days** means exactly that -- immediately after the time of the horrific **great tribulation** all the world will see unmistakable cosmic signs pointing to the immediate return of the Messiah!

Mt 24:19 "But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in **those days**!

**What days?** Clearly this refers to the **days** of the **great tribulation** which begins when the **abomination of desolation** stands

in the holy place (Mt 24:15-note).

Mt 24:22 "And unless **those days** had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

**To what days does Jesus refer?** If one allows **context** to rule in the interpretation, it is clear that **those days** refers to **those days** of the **great tribulation** He had just described.

Mt 24:29 "But immediately after the tribulation of **those days** THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken

**To what days does Jesus refer?** He has just mentioned "**those days**" twice and both of those uses are in the **context** of the **great tribulation**. As stated earlier, if one allows **context** to rule in interpretation, **those days** of Mt 24:29 refer to **those days** of **the great tribulation**. Regardless of how one interprets Mt 24:15, any other interpretation would require one to take the text out of its normal, plain **context**!

**Craig Blomberg** in the New American Commentary on Matthew associates **those days** of Mt 24:29 with the Great Tribulation. However in order to explain the phrase "**immediately after the tribulation of those days**" he says that the Great Tribulation lasts from Jesus' first advent to His second advent. This interpretation of the entire church age as a period of unprecedented tribulation simply does not make good sense! Blomberg's interpretation of the "great tribulation" as lasting almost 2000 years ignores the fact that Jesus was describing a unique, unprecedented, never to be repeated specific time of testing which in fact would be "**cut short**"! (Mt 24:22-note) Does Jesus' description of a time that would be **cut short** sound like an unprecedented "**Great Tribulation**" that has lasted for almost 2000 years? Furthermore, Jeremiah and Daniel both had similar descriptions of a time of unparalleled distress that would come upon Israel in the last days. In Jeremiah 30:7-note the distress that will come upon the nation of Israel future is described as "**there is none like it.**" The time of distress in Daniel 12:1-note clearly does not extend from Jesus' first to second coming but in the context of Da 11:36-45-note will be the time when the Antichrist wages war with the Jews for 3.5 years (cp Da 7:25-note, Rev 13:5-8-note). Notice how Daniel like Jesus specifies a time of unparalleled tribulation describing this as **a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time**". Furthermore, in the context which follows Daniel's description of the **time of distress** the prophet records that this horrible time of Israel's purging, purifying and refining (Da 12:10-note) will last not for thousands of years but for **"time, times and half a time"** (3.5 years) (Da 12:7-note). Given the clear similarity of the descriptions of the **times of distress** by Jesus (Mt 24:21-note) and Daniel (Da 12:1-note), it follows that the length of time of the **Great Tribulation** is also 3.5 years and **not** an extended period of 2000 years as posited by Blomberg (and others who hold to a 70AD position)! In sum, Blomberg is forced to interpret the **Great Tribulation** as occurring over an extended period of time in order to make his 70AD interpretation of Mt 24:15-22-note compatible with the Mt 24:29 description "**immediately after the tribulation,**" a time which clearly precedes the future second coming (Mt 24:30-note).

**Leon Morris** in the top rated Pillar NT Commentary on Matthew does not even attempt to explain the phrase "**immediately after the tribulation of those days**" writing that "Jesus has spoken of troubled times that will precede the end of all things, and he now goes on to speak of what will follow the distress he has earlier mentioned (Mt 24:9 and Mt 24:21). He speaks of significant celestial phenomena in language reminiscent of Old Testament passages but without specifically quoting them (e.g., Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10)." (The Gospel according to Matthew)

**Randolph Yeager** has a comment on the "preteristic" commentaries (of which the preceding are just a sampling) - The attempt to show that Jesus' prophecy had its fulfillment between A.D. 33 and A.D. 70, disregards Matthew 24:29-31. None of these events took place ("immediately after") the troublous times connected with Titus' invasion and sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 70....These drastic disturbances in the heavens will highlight the second coming of Christ....**How frantic the efforts of many commentators in dealing with this passage because they are prejudiced against a futurist view.** ( The Renaissance New Testament, 18 vols. (Bowling Green, KY: Renaissance Press, 1978, vol. 3. p. 312) (Bolding added for emphasis)

## **UNMISTAKABLE COSMIC SIGNS HERALD HIS COMING AND THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE**

**The moon...the stars...powers of the heavens - To what or whom does this refer?** There is some debate as to whether Jesus' words are to be interpreted literally or figuratively. It is surprising that "*The terminology has generally been regarded as figurative, simply denoting political and international upheavals. But modern scientific developments have shown that the possibility the language may be a sober description of grim reality cannot be ruled out.*" (Hiebert) However in light of the description in Mt 24:7 of "**famines and earthquakes**" the effects of the moon and stars could be interpreted literally. As one writer says "*When the sign of His coming is given, it will defy scientists and pseudoscientists, astronomers and astrologers, but there will be no way to misread its purpose.*" The **powers of the heavens** could be literal (meteor shower, etc) or figurative as some "*suggestively hold that here, in contrast to the preceding three statements dealing with inanimate objects, the reference is to personal powers or hosts in the*



heavens. Then the most likely reference is to the mighty shaking effect that these events will have on the kingdom of Satan and his hosts." ([Hiebert](#))

**Thomas Ice** - Matthew 24:29 is not a new revelation by our Lord. Old Testament passages like Isaiah 13:9-10 and Joel 2:31; 3:15 also reference this "black out" and light show that will occur "immediately after the tribulation," in preparation for Christ's second coming as noted in Matthew 24:30. These Old Testament passages refer to the same future events that Christ describes in Matthew 24:29. In conjunction with the return of Jesus, Israel will be rescued from her tribulation by the Lord Himself (Matthew 24:31). We see the theme of rescue associated with the Lord's return reinforced from the contexts of these Old Testament passages, especially Joel 2; and Joel 3, especially Joel 2:31 and Joel 3:1-2. It is clear that our Lord has quoted part of His declaration about the sun and moon in Matthew 24:29, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT,..." from Joel 2:31. Both are speaking of the same time and events—the time immediately following the tribulation and in conjunction with Christ's return. Thus, it is interesting to take note of Joel 3:1-2, which provides a "time text" saying that the "black out" (Joel 2:31) will occur "in those day and at that time" (Joel 3:1). In conjunction with this is described a time when the Lord will "restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem" (Joel 3:1). Not judgment, but deliverance, as in Matthew 24. This event is said to be a time when the Lord "will gather all the nations" (Joel 3:1) in the valley of Jehoshaphat just north of Jerusalem. Further, it will be a time in which Israel will have been regathered from among the nations (Joel 3:2). This will be the time in which the sun and moon will be darkened. ([Matthew 24:29 The Sun, Moon, and Stars](#))

In his study notes **Dr MacArthur** comments on Joel 2:30, 31 -- Unmistakable heavenly phenomena will signal the imminent arrival of God's wrath in the Day of the Lord (cf. Joel 2:10+ - commenting on **Day of Lord** in Joel 1:15+ he adds "the Day of the Lord (the occasion when God pours out His wrath on man) results in blessing and exoneration for God's people and judgment toward Gentiles [Is 13:6+; Eze 30:3], but here Joel directs the warning toward his own people.) (The MacArthur study Bible: New American Standard Bible)

The **Gospel of Luke** also describes the tumultuous time preceding the Lord's return:

And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men **fainting** from fear (terror) and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Lk 21:25-26+)

**John MacArthur** commenting on Luke's description observes that "The events will be so calamitous that men will faint from absolute terror. The Greek term behind "**faint**" means to expire or stop breathing, indicating that people will literally die of fright. No hurricane, tornado, tidal wave, earthquake, volcanic eruption, or combination of those natural disasters in history will have approached the extreme disruption of those end-time days." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

**Sun will be darkened** - This sign surely describes a time of literal darkness which presages (is a sign that something will happen) the **parousia** of the **Deliverer**. Recall that Paul teaches that when Jesus returns immediately after the Great Tribulation (cf Mt 24:30) He will accomplish a miraculous **deliverance** for Israel...

all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE **DELIVERER** WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (Ro 11:26-27-note)

Let's keep that future **deliverance** of Israel in mind as we look at the sign in Mt 24:30 that the **sun will be darkened**. Recall that there was another time in the past in which Jehovah brought about a **great deliverance** for the nation of Israel, a deliverance which was also associated with **darkness**:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick **darkness** in all the land of Egypt for three days. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings. (Ex. 10:21-23+, cp "delivered" in Ex 18:8, 9, 10+)

Similarly when redemption (payment of the price for our deliverance from bondage to sin and Satan) was accomplished for mankind by Jesus on the Cross there was a period of **darkness**

Now from the sixth hour **darkness** fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. (Mt. 27:45)

**NET Note** say "The **heavens** were seen as the abode of heavenly forces, so their shaking indicates distress in the spiritual realm. Although some take the powers as a reference to bodies in the heavens (like stars and planets, "the heavenly bodies," NIV) this is not as likely."

**Shall be darkened** ([4654](#))(**skotizo** from **skia** = shadow) means literally to be or become dark or to be unable to give light (Mt 24:29, Mk 13:24, Eccl 12:2).

**John Walvoord** - The frightening display of divine disruption of the heavens, which precedes the **Second Coming** described graphically in Revelation 6:12-14 and in many other of the judgments of God described in the book of Revelation, will be climaxed by the glorious appearing of Christ in heaven (cf. Rev 19:11-16-note). This will be a coming of the Lord to judge and subdue the earth and to bring in His earthly kingdom.

**And the moon will not give its light** - Moon is [pheggos](#) which "refers to the light of the sun reflected by the moon, which is analogous to the church's reflection of the glory of Christ. This culminating darkness will end when He who is the "bright and morning star" dispels it once and for all (Rev 22:16-note)." (Zodhiates - Exegetical Commentary on Matthew)

**Isaiah** had prophesied of this future frightful **Day of the Lord** when God will punish the world for its intractable godlessness and wanton evil...

Behold, the **Day of the Lord** is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For (term of explanation - explaining how this Day will be characterized) the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity. I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts In the day of His burning anger. (Isaiah 13:9-13)

**And the stars will fall from the sky** - The future tense could be rendered "shall be falling" and stresses the duration, star after star falling depicting a mighty disorganization in the heavenlies! Specifically this description could refer to "[Comets](#)" (Greek words for "star" is [aster](#) - gives us English [Asteroid](#), cp [Meteorites](#)) striking the earth in that fateful, future day.

John saw that future day which will occur during **Daniel's Seventieth Week**

"I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind." (Rev 6:12-13-note), see other "shaking" in Revelation - Rev 8:12-note, Rev 11:13-note, Rev 16:18-19-note)

**Comment:** When do the Seal Judgments occur. While it is best to not be dogmatic, my view is that the Seals and Trumpets occur in the first 3.5 years of **Daniel's Seventieth Week** with the 7th Trumpet corresponding to the midpoint of the Seven Years of "Tribulation" marking the beginning of the 3.5 years Jesus designated as the **Great Tribulation**.

**Tony Garland** on "**the sun became black as sackcloth**" Jesus said that cosmic signs would be associated with the time of the end (Mt. 24:29-note; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:11). From other considerations, we understand that the signs associated with this sixth seal are not the only cosmic signs of this time period. (Fruchtenbaum recognizes "five cosmic disturbances: one before the seven years, three during, and one after."—Fruchtenbaum, A Review of the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church)

The Isaiah 13:9-10 and Joel 3:14-15 passages [concerning cosmic disturbances] clearly take place within the Day of the Lord, . . . Joel 2:30-31 describes cosmic disturbances before the Day of the Lord. In the prophetic scheme of things, there are several cosmic disturbances. (Ibid)

There are reasons for concluding that the cosmic disturbances related to the beginning of the Joel 3 Day of the Lord and the Second Coming of Christ immediately after the Great Tribulation are not the same as those of the sixth seal. First, the cosmic disturbances of Joel 3:1-21 will occur when the armies of the nations have gathered for war in Israel. Those armies will not begin to gather for war until the sixth bowl has been poured out (Rev. 16:12-16), long after the sixth seal—one seal, seven trumpets, and five bowls after the cosmic disturbances of the sixth seal. . . . other cosmic disturbances will occur after those of the sixth seal. A third of the sun, moon, and stars will be darkened by the fourth trumpet (Rev. 8:12); the sun will be darkened by smoke from the abyss at the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:1-2); the sun will scorch people on the earth with fire and fierce heat when the fourth bowl is poured out (Rev 16:8-9). . . . when the cosmic disturbances of the sixth seal take place, kings, military men, and all other classes of people will run to the caves and rocks of the mountains to hide. . . . By contrast, when the cosmic disturbances immediately before the Joel 3 Day of the Lord occur after the sixth bowl, the kings and military men will not run and hide. Rather, they will remain assembled together in battle array to boldly attempt war against God, His Messiah, and the holy angels (Ps 2:1-3; Joel 3:9-16; Zec. 12:2-9; 14:1-6, 12-14).(Showers, Maranatha, Our Lord Come, 66-69)

The sun and moon were created for "signs" (Gen. 1:14). (**Passages describing astronomical signs:** Isa. 5:30; 13:10; 24:23; 30:26; 50:3; Jer. 4:23-28; Eze. 32:7; Joel 2:10; 2:31; 3:15; Amos 8:9; Mat. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25; 23:45; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:12; 8:12; 9:2.) They now provide indication that the events associated with this seal cannot be explained by natural phenomena—but result from the One Who controls the universe!

The darkening of the sun may be from the perspective of viewers on the earth—due to material ejected into the upper atmosphere by the earthquake or the impact of asteroids in the next verse. Although the sun is darkened, the moon continues to reflect light (as if the path light follows between the sun and moon is only minimally affected). In the fifth trumpet judgment, it is smoke which darkens the sun (Rev. 9:2).

Eventually, like the earth, the sun and moon are judged to show those who dwell on the earth Who the true source of light is—the Lord Himself. If the trend in our own day is any indication, worship of the heavenly bodies will still be prevalent at that time and so God interferes with that which man has idolized (Zep. 1:5). (Concerning the worship of heavenly bodies: Ge 11:4; Dt 4:19; 17:3; 2K. 17:16; 23:5, 11; 2Chr. 33:3; Job 31:26-28; Isa. 47:13; Jer. 8:2; 10:2; 19:13; Acts 7:42; Ro 1:25; Rev. 8:12) As always, the message is to turn from dead idols to serve the living God (cp 1Th 1:9):

The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. (Isa. 60:19-20)

**Garland** comments on **the stars of the sky fell to the earth** - Stars is asteres from which we get the word **asteroid**. The word is also used of the supernatural manifestation which led the magi to the babe (Mat. 2:2), Christ who is the "morning star" (Rev. 2:27; 22:16), angels (Rev. 1:16; 2:1; 3:1; 9:1), and astronomical objects (Mt. 24:29; Mk 13:25; 1Cor. 15:41; Rev. 6:3; Rev. 8:10). Here and in Revelation 8:10 stars are said to fall to the earth. It seems best to understand these as asteroids or meteors for even the smallest sun would consume the entire planet should it ever fall to earth. (Some believe these stars could refer to fallen angels. "The sixth seal marks the end of the first half of the tribulation, so these stars could be the expulsion of Satan's host from Heaven Rev. 12:7-12 with 12:3-4."—Mills, Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John, Rev. 6:13.)

The stars proper are certainly still found in their places after the fulfilment of this vision. (See Rev. 8:12.) And remembering that the Scriptures often speak in the common language of men, without reference to the distinctions of science, and that even science itself still popularly speaks of "falling stars," when it means simply meteoric phenomena, it appears but reasonable that we should understand the apostle to be speaking of something of the same sort. ([Joseph Seiss](#))

The most likely identification of these particular falling stars is that of a great swarm of asteroids that pummel the earth. Such an event has never occurred in historic times, but scientists have long speculated about the probability of either past or future earth catastrophes caused by encountering a swarm of asteroids. (Henry Morris, The Revelation Record. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983, Rev. 6:13.)

"The sixth seal presents a disturbance of nature so vast that we naturally seek to explain it as **hyperbole**," but this is not merely **hyperbolic** language. (See **Garland's explanatory note below**) (See [Interpreting Symbols](#)) These are the very signs that Jesus predicted would attend the period preceding His return:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days 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. **Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven**, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Mt. 24:29-30-note cf. Mk 13:24-25; Luke 23:44-45; Rev 1:7) [emphasis added]

Isaiah had been shown this fearsome time:

Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore **I will shake the heavens**, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger. (Isa. 13:9-13) [emphasis added]

In these judgments, God is shattering the puny pillars of support which men trust in when they turn away from Him.

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the **removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain**. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. (Heb. 12:25-28-note) [emphasis added]

The increasingly severe judgments which fall during this period are specifically designed to remove hope in all else but God so

that all creatures recognize their utter dependence upon the Creator. Hope placed anywhere else is idolatry. God now begins a systematic destruction of the natural order (sun, moon, stars, earth) which men have often deferred to in place of the Creator.<sup>95</sup> In its failure to recognize the Creator, environmentalism eventually fails in its effort to preserve the creation.

**Explanatory Note** from **Tony Garland** - As we forewarned the reader in our discussion concerning [The Genre of the book of Revelation](#), many interpreters part ways here from the Golden Rule of Interpretation in favor of subjective "apocalypticism." (Thus Mounce postulates that) "The details of this dramatic description of a universe in turmoil are drawn from the common stock of current apocalypticism. They are not to be taken with **complete literalness**. Those who first read John's description would not have bothered to debate whether or not the details were to be taken literally. They were part of a well-established tradition that went back through contemporary apocalyptic literature to the early prophetic portrayals of the day of the Lord."—Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 161. We might ask who decides what "**complete literalness**" means? Which parts are literal and which parts are not? Are the men literal? But not the stars? "The suggestion of combining symbolic and literal (Mounce) is fraught with hermeneutical difficulty."—Thomas, [Revelation 1-7](#), Rev. [6:12](#). Also: how *would* God convey these events if they *were* literal? The [Anti-supernatural Bias](#) of these interpreters makes it nearly impossible for God to tell us of catastrophic events because they always get recast as "[apocalyptic](#)" and therefore not literal. ([A Testimony of Jesus Christ - Revelation 6](#))

Luke makes clear that these cataclysmic events are not mere literary hyperbole, but real physical events which include not just heavenly bodies, but the earth and sea: "upon the earth [there will be] dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for [because] the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Luke 21:26).

**The powers of the heavens will be shaken** - This passage is more difficult to interpret as some see powers as that which holds the heavens in place whereas others see powers as referring to angelic hosts who are powerful.

**Hiebert on the powers of the heavens shall be shaken**— "a further statement of vast convulsions in the heavenly world. In Acts 16:26, the verb **shaken** is used of the effect of an earthquake, so that the convulsion here might be described as an earthquake in the heavens. Some understand the **powers** to mean the impersonal physical forces of nature which control the movements of the heavenly bodies. But others suggestively hold that here, in contrast to the preceding three statements dealing with inanimate objects, the reference is to personal **powers** or hosts in the heavens. Then the most likely reference is to the mighty shaking effect that these events will have on the kingdom of Satan and his hosts. (The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary)

**MacArthur** - During that time the **powers of the heavens will be shaken** by Jesus Christ, the One who "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3-note), Just as He created everything, He also sustains everything (**Ed**: cp Col 1:17-note "in Him all things hold together."), and without His full sustaining power, gravity will weaken and the orbits of the stars and planets will fluctuate. Astronomers can predict coming stellar events centuries in advance only because of the absolute consistency of the divinely ordered and uniform laws that control the operation of the stars and planets. But when the Lord withdraws the least of His power from the universe, nothing in it will function normally, and every aspect of the physical world will be disrupted beyond imagination. All the forces of energy, here called powers of the heavens, which hold everything in space constant, will be in dysfunction. The heavenly bodies will careen helter-skelter through space, and all navigation, whether stellar, solar, magnetic, or gyroscopic, will be futile because all stable reference points and uniform natural forces will have ceased to exist or else become unreliable. The earth is held together by the power of God, and when that power is diminished, the resulting chaos will be inconceivable. Speculations such as the one just cited, no matter how scientifically derived, can only remotely approximate what the actual situation will be like. But just as the withdrawal of a small part of God's sustaining power will cause such pervasive chaos and destruction, so will His supernatural control of that disintegration prevent the total destruction of the earth. His sovereign power will preserve and restore it and its people for the establishing of His **Millennial Kingdom**. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

**Shall be shaken** (agitated) ([4531](#))(**saleuo** from **salos** = wave) means to cause to move to and fro, cause to waver or totter, make to rock. **Saleuo** refers to unexpected and disastrous shaking of those things that men generally consider to be stable (e.g. earth or sky).

**Tony Garland** answers "Why such cataclysmic judgment? (1) A judgment of God on a par with the flood. Wrath commensurate with another eruption of sin. (2) Judging idolatry: responding to the worship of creation over the Creator. (3) Validating the prophetic predictions of His Word. (4) Answering the scoffers of the end: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2Peter 3:4-note).

## SUMMARY OF SIMILAR COSMIC SIGNS IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

**Sun will be darkened:**

- Isa. 13:10 = The **sun will be dark** when it rises
- Isa 24:23 = Then...the **sun** ashamed
- Jer 4:23-28 = the heavens above be **dark**
- Joel 2:10 = The **sun** and the moon grow **dark**
- Joel 3:15 = The **sun** and **moon** grow **dark**,
- Amos 5:20 = Will not the day of the LORD be **darkness**
- Amos 8:9 = the **sun** go down at noon and make the earth **dark** in broad daylight
- Rev. 6:12 = the **sun** became black as sackcloth made of hair

#### **Moon will not give its light:**

- Isa. 13:10 = And the **moon will not shed its light**.
- Isa 24:23 = Then the **moon** will be abashed
- Ezek. 32:7 = **moon** shall not give its light
- Joel 2:10 = The **sun** and the **moon** grow dark
- Joel 2:30-31 = the **moon** into blood, before the great and awesome **Day of the LORD** comes
- Joel 3:15 = The **sun** and **moon** grow dark
- Rev. 6:12 = And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the **sun** became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole **moon** became like blood;

#### **The stars:**

- Isa 34:4 = all the **host** of heaven will wear away...All their **hosts** will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree.
- Joel 3:15 = and the **stars** lose their brightness
- Rev. 6:13 = and the **stars** of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind

#### **Powers of the heavens:**

- Joel 2:10 = The **heavens** tremble
- Hag. 2:6, 21 = I am going to shake the **heavens** and the earth, the sea also and the dry land...I am going to shake the **heavens** and the earth.
- Luke 21:26 = the powers of the **heavens** will be shaken.
- Rev. 6:13 = the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

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Matthew 24:36-44 **An Ordinary Day** - Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. —Matthew 24:42

While exploring a museum exhibit titled "A Day in Pompeii," I was struck by the repeated theme that August 24, 79 AD began as an ordinary day. People were going about their daily business in homes, markets, and at the port of this prosperous Roman town of 20,000 people. At 8 a.m., a series of small emissions were seen coming from nearby Mount Vesuvius, followed by a violent eruption in the afternoon. In less than 24 hours, Pompeii and many of its people lay buried under a thick layer of volcanic ash. Unexpected.

Jesus told His followers that He would return on a day when people were going about their business, sharing meals, and having weddings, with no idea of what was about to happen. "As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:37).

The Lord's purpose was to urge the disciples to be watchful and prepared: "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt 24:44). - David McCasland ([Copyright Our Daily Bread - All rights reserved](#))

What surprising joy it would be to welcome our Savior on this ordinary day!

**Perhaps today!**