



When shall these things be?

THE GREAT PROMISE AND HOPE OF THE SECOND
COMING OF JESUS

Lesson 21—Mark 13, Matthew 24, Luke 21

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. (John 13:1–3)

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18)

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

(Revelation 1:7)

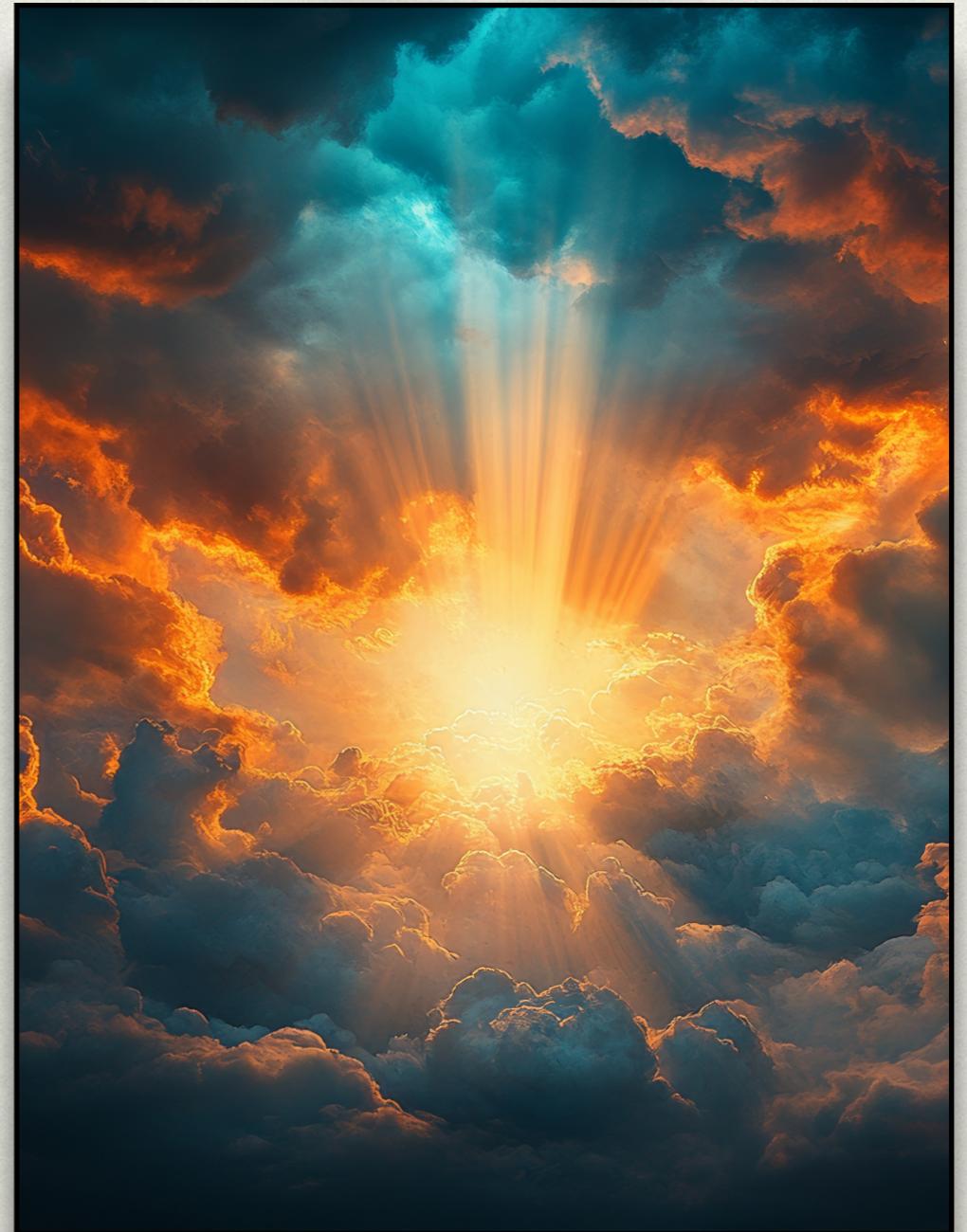
For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father
with his angels; and then he shall reward every man
according to his works. (Matthew 16:27)

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;
in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great
noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the
earth also and the works that are therein shall be
burned up. (2 Peter 3:10)

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. (Mark 13:26–27)

QUESTIONS ASKED— MATTHEW 24

- When shall these things be?
- What shall be the sign of thy coming?
- And of the end of the world?
- Jesus' answer—Take heed that no man deceive you.



MARK 13; LUKE 21

- ***Leaving the Temple***—Jesus and at least four of His disciples made a steep descent to the Kidron Valley, and ascended the slope of the Mount of Olives, which rises 400 ft. above the Kidron Valley. Being about 300 ft. higher than the Temple, the mountain provides a view of the Temple and the city.
- ***To shew him.*** “Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” The Temple was the pride and joy of every Jewish heart. Josephus compares the white stone walls of the Temple to the beauty of a snow-covered mountain and gives the fabulous size of some of its stones—about 66 by 7 by 9 ft. The Temple had then been in process of construction for nearly 50 years (see John 2:20), and work on the entire complex of courts and buildings was not completed until about the year AD 63—only seven years before it was totally destroyed by the army of Titus.

- ***Coming***—*parousia*—arrival, in Gospels used only in Matthew 24:27, 37, 39, but often in the Epistles. In secular writings of the time commonly referred to the arrival of a king or an emperor. Matthew 24 is first extended discussion of the second coming in the Gospels.
- ***End of the world*** —end of the present order and the beginning of the Messianic age

- ***The abomination of desolation.*** Among the Jews an idol or other heathen symbol was often termed an “abomination.” The parallel passage in Luke reads, “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh” (ch. 21:20). The event foretold is obviously the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, at which time the symbols of pagan Rome were set up within the Temple area.
- Because the prophecy of Daniel pointed so clearly to the time the Messiah was to appear, the rabbis, in later centuries, placed a curse on those who should attempt a computation of the time.
- “The prophecy of Daniel pointed so unmistakably to the time of Messiah’s coming, and so directly foretold His death, that they discouraged its study, and finally the rabbis pronounced a curse on all who should attempt a computation of the time” (*GC 378*).

- ***Flee into the mountains***—Josephus says more than one million people perished during and after the siege of the city and 97,000 more were taken captive. However, during a temporary respite, when the Romans unexpectedly raised their siege of Jerusalem, all the Christians fled, and it is said that not one of them lost his life. Their place of retreat was Pella, a city in the foothills east of the Jordan River, about 17 mi./27 km. south of the Lake of Galilee.
- ***Carcase***—The enigmatic statement was probably a popular proverb. Upon seeing a flock probably of vultures circling in the air or assembled on the ground, a person would rightly conclude that there must be carrion near. Otherwise the vultures would be soaring about singly in search of food. In other words, these birds gather together only when there is real reason for doing so.
- If could mean that the multiplication of signs is evidence that something decisive is at hand or it could be a warning to Christians against flocking out to see the false christs or to hear the false prophets.

In Matthew 24, in answer to the question of His disciples concerning the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church from His first to His second advent; namely, the **destruction of Jerusalem**, the great tribulation of the church under the **pagan and papal persecutions**, the **darkening of the sun and moon**, and the **falling of the stars**. After this He spoke of His coming in His kingdom, and related the parable describing the two classes of servants who look for His appearing. Chapter 25 opens with the words: “*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.*” Here is brought to view the church living in the last days, the same that is pointed out in the close of chapter 24. In this parable their experience is illustrated by the incidents of an Eastern marriage. (*GC 393.2*)

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great **earthquake**; and the **sun** became black as sackcloth of hair, and the **moon** became as blood; And the **stars** of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the **heaven** departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:12–17)

These signs were witnessed before the opening of the nineteenth century. In fulfillment of this prophecy [of Revelation 6:12] there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of **Lisbon [11-1-1755]**, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles. In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco, a village containing eight or ten thousand inhabitants was swallowed up. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain and Africa engulfing cities and causing great destruction. (*GC 304.2*)

Twenty-five years later appeared the next sign mentioned in the prophecy—the **darkening of the sun and moon**. What rendered this more striking was the fact that the time of its fulfillment had been definitely pointed out. In the Saviour's conversation with His disciples upon Olivet, after describing the long period of trial for the church,—the 1260 years of papal persecution, concerning which He had promised that the tribulation should be shortened,—He thus mentioned certain events to precede His coming, and fixed the time when the first of these should be witnessed: “In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” Mark 13:24. The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the **19th of May, 1780**, this prophecy was fulfilled.

(GC 306.1)

An eyewitness living in Massachusetts describes the event as follows: “In the morning the sun rose clear, but was soon overcast. The clouds became lowery, and from them, black and ominous, as they soon appeared, lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and a little rain fell. Toward nine o’clock, the clouds became thinner, and assumed a brassy or coppery appearance, and earth, rocks, trees, buildings, water, and persons were changed by this strange, unearthly light. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except a narrow rim at the horizon, and it was as dark as it usually is at nine o’clock on a summer evening.... (GC 306.3)

“Fear, anxiety, and awe gradually filled the minds of the people. Women stood at the door, looking out upon the dark landscape; men returned from their labor in the fields; the carpenter left his tools, the blacksmith his forge, the tradesman his counter. Schools were dismissed, and tremblingly the children fled homeward. Travelers put up at the nearest farmhouse. ‘What is coming?’ queried every lip and heart. It seemed as if a hurricane was about to dash across the land, or as if it was the day of the consummation of all things. (*GC 306.4*)

“Candles were used; and hearth fires shone as brightly as on a moonless evening in autumn.... Fowls retired to their roosts and went to sleep, cattle gathered at the pasture bars and lowed, frogs peeped, birds sang their evening songs, and bats flew about. But the human knew that night had not come.... (*GC 307.1*)

In 1833 [11–13–1833], two years after Miller began to present in public the evidences of Christ’s soon coming, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus: “The **stars** shall fall from heaven.” Matthew 24:29. And John in the Revelation declared, as he beheld in vision the scenes that should herald the day of God: “The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” Revelation 6:13. This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded; “the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion!—R. M. Devens, *American Progress; or, The Great Events of the Greatest Century*, ch. 28, pars. 1–5. (GC 333.1)

No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or with so much dread and alarm by another.” “Its sublimity and awful beauty still linger in many minds.... Never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion.... The display, as described in Professor Silliman’s *Journal*, was seen all over North America.... From two o’clock until broad daylight, the sky being perfectly serene and cloudless, an incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens.”—R. M. Devens, *American Progress; or, The Great Events of the Greatest Century*, ch. 28, pars. 1–5. (GC 333.1)

Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near. Said Jesus: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." Luke 21:25. "The **sun** shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the **stars** of heaven shall fall, and the **powers** that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:24–26. The revelator thus describes **the first of the signs to precede the second advent**: "There was a great **earthquake**; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." Revelation 6:12. (*GC* 304.1)

Mark 13:24: But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of **the shaking of the powers of the heavens**. I saw that when the Lord said “heaven,” in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said “earth” He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then **the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places**. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God. (*EW* 41.1)

Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space. I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.

(EW 41.2)

It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes **the voice of God** like the sound of many waters, saying: "It is done."

Revelation 16:17. (*GC 636.2*)

That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, “such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” **Verses 17, 18 [of Revelation 16].** The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. (*GC 636.3*)

- And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: And all their host shall fall down, As the leaf falleth off from the vine, And as a falling *fig* from the fig tree. (Isaiah 34:4)
- And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. (Revelation 6:14)

- Matthew 24:29 (Luke 21:26)
- ***Immediately after.*** Matthew and Mark here refer to the 1260 days (years) of papal persecution terminating in 1798. It was toward the close of this period of time that the sun was darkened. (*SDA BC* on Matthew 24:29)
- ***The powers of the heavens.*** That is, the sun, moon, and stars. The shaking of the “powers of the heavens” does not refer to the phenomena described in the earlier part of the verse, but to a time yet future when the heavenly bodies “will be moved out of their places ... shaken by the voice of God.” This will take place when His voice shakes “this earth also” (EW 41), at the opening of the seventh plague (Rev. 16:17–20). (*Ibid.*)
- The latter part of the verse gives as the climactic reason for men’s hearts failing them for fear, the shaking of “the powers of heaven.” The scene here depicted takes place under the seventh plague (EW 41; GC 636). Upon this scene “the wicked look with terror and amazement” (GC 636), calling for the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them (Rev. 6:14–17). (*SDA BC* on Luke 21:26)

In the time of trouble we all fled from the cities and villages, but were pursued by the wicked, who entered the houses of the saints with a sword. They raised the sword to kill us, but it broke, and fell as powerless as a straw. Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. The sun came up, and the moon stood still. The streams ceased to flow. Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. But there was one clear place of settled glory, whence came **the voice of God** like many waters, **which shook the heavens and the earth**. The sky opened and shut and was in commotion. The mountains shook like a reed in the wind, and cast out ragged rocks all around. The sea boiled like a pot and cast out stones upon the land. And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. (*EW* 34.1)

Now in regard to the coming of the Son of Man. This will not take place until after the mighty **earthquake** shakes the earth. After the people have heard **the voice of God** they are in despair and trouble such as never was since there was a nation, and in this **the people of God will suffer affliction**. The clouds of heaven will clash, and there will be darkness. Then that voice comes from heaven and the clouds begin to roll back like a scroll, and there is the bright, clear sign of the Son of Man. The children of God know what that cloud means. (4LtMs, Ms 81, 1886, par. 4)

Revelation 16:17–18: And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came **a great voice** out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was **a great earthquake**, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.

Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, “to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.” Great **hailstones**, every one “about the weight of a talent,” are doing their work of destruction. Verses 19, 21. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God’s people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free. (*GC 636.3*)

Graves are opened, and “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth ... awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2. All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. “They also which pierced Him” (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient. (*GC 637.1*)

Thick clouds still cover the sky; yet the sun now and then breaks through, appearing like the avenging eye of Jehovah. Fierce lightnings leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked. The words spoken are not comprehended by all; but they are distinctly understood by the false teachers. Those who a little before were so reckless, so boastful and defiant, so exultant in their cruelty to God's commandment-keeping people, are now overwhelmed with consternation and shuddering in fear. Their wails are heard above the sound of the elements. Demons acknowledge the deity of Christ and tremble before His power, while men are supplicating for mercy and groveling in abject terror. (*GC 637.2*)

Now there are many signs that will take place before the coming of the Son of Man, but when **the white cloud** is seen, this will be **the sign of the coming of the Son of Man**. There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and the nations in perplexity. These all testify that Christ is coming, and He is revealed in the clouds with power and great glory. (4LtMs, Ms 81, 1886, par. 8)

Soon there appears in the east a **small black cloud**, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. (*GC 640.3*)

Now in regard to the coming of the Son of Man. This will not take place until after the mighty **earthquake** shakes the earth. After the people have heard **the voice of God** they are in despair and trouble such as never was since there was a nation, and in this **the people of God will suffer affliction**. The clouds of heaven will clash, and there will be darkness. Then that voice comes from heaven and the clouds begin to roll back like a scroll, and there is the bright, clear sign of the Son of Man. The children of God know what that cloud means. (4LtMs, Ms 81, 1886, par. 4)

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The season of **distress and anguish** before us will require a faith that can endure **weariness, delay, and hunger**—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. (*GC 621.2*)

Although the apostles were miraculously delivered from prison, **they were not safe from** examination and punishment. Christ had said when He was with them, “Take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils.” Mark 13:9. By sending an angel to deliver them, God had given them a token of His love and an assurance of His presence. It was now their part to suffer for the sake of the One whose gospel they were preaching. (AA 81.3)

The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. And at the end of every sentence the saints shouted, “Glory! Alleluia!” Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God; and they shone with the glory, as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked could not look on them for the glory. And when the never-ending blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image. (*EW 34.1*)

Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Not now a "Man of Sorrows," to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead. "Faithful and True," "in righteousness He doth judge and make war." And "the armies which were in heaven" (Revelation 19:11, 14) follow Him. (*GC* 640.3)

With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way. The firmament seems filled with radiant forms—“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor. “His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light.”

Habakkuk 3:3, 4. As the living cloud comes still nearer, every eye beholds the Prince of life. No crown of thorns now mars that sacred head; but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow. His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun. “And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Revelation 19:16. (*GC* 640.3)

Lo, this *is* our God; We have waited for him, and he will save us: This *is* the Lord; we have waited for him, We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (Isaiah 25:9)

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20)