

Luke 21:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Analysis

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring. Jesus shifts from Jerusalem's AD 70 destruction to cosmic signs accompanying His return. The phrase *sēmeia en hēliō kai selēnē kai astrois* (σημεῖα ἐν ἡλίῳ καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ ἀστροῖς, "signs in sun and moon and stars") echoes Old Testament apocalyptic language (Joel 2:30-31, Isaiah 13:10). These celestial disturbances indicate God's direct intervention in history—the natural order shaken as the Creator returns.

The earthly response is *synochē ethnōn en aporia* (συνοχὴ ἐθνῶν ἐν ἀπορίᾳ, "distress of nations in perplexity"). The noun *synochē* (συνοχή) means constraint, anguish, being hemmed in; *aporia* (ἀπορία) means bewilderment, being at a loss, inability to find a way forward. Nations will be trapped in crisis without solutions—political systems failing, human wisdom exhausted. The phrase *ēchous thalassēs kai salou* (ἤχους θαλάσσης καὶ σάλου, "sound of sea and waves") may be literal (tsunamis, storm surges) or metaphorical (nations raging like turbulent seas, per Psalm 46:2-3, Isaiah 17:12).

This cosmic upheaval distinguishes Christ's return from Jerusalem's fall. AD 70 was local judgment; the Second Coming involves universal signs. These portents serve dual purposes: they terrify unbelievers (v. 26) but signal redemption for believers (v. 28).

Historical Context

Old Testament prophets used cosmic imagery to describe divine judgment—Joel's prophecy of the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:30-31), Isaiah's oracle against Babylon (Isaiah 13:9-10), and Ezekiel's lament over Egypt (Ezekiel 32:7-8). Jesus applies this apocalyptic language to His Second Coming. Whether the celestial signs are literal disruptions of astronomy or symbolic language describing political upheaval is debated. Amillennial and preterist interpreters often see metaphorical language; premillennialists typically expect literal cosmic disturbances. Peter quoted Joel on Pentecost (Acts 2:19-20), suggesting partial fulfillment in AD 30-70, but Jesus here points to final consummation. Throughout church history, unusual astronomical phenomena (comets, eclipses, meteors) have prompted speculation about fulfillment.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do cosmic signs accompanying Christ's return demonstrate that His Second Coming will be unmistakable and universal, unlike false messiahs?
2. What is the relationship between Old Testament apocalyptic language about 'day of the Lord' and Jesus' teaching about the end times?
3. How should believers balance expectation of Christ's return with patient, faithful living in the present?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἔσται	σημεῖα	ἐν	ἡλίῳ	καὶ	σελήνῃ	καὶ	
And	there shall be	signs	in	the sun	And	in the moon	And	
G2532	G2071	G4592	G1722	G2246	G2532	G4582	G2532	
ἄστροις	καὶ	ἐπὶ	τῆς	γῆς	συνοχῇ	ἐθνῶν	ἐν	ἀπορίᾳ
in the stars	And	upon	G3588	the earth	distress	of nations	in	perplexity
G798	G2532	G1909		G1093	G4928	G1484	G1722	G640
ἡχούσης	θαλάσσης	καὶ	σάλου					
roaring	the sea	And	the waves					
G2278	G2281	G2532	G4535					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 13:10 (Parallel theme): For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

Daniel 12:1 (Parallel theme): And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Isaiah 24:23 (Parallel theme): Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Revelation 20:11 (Parallel theme): And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Isaiah 51:15 (Parallel theme): But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.

Acts 2:19 (Parallel theme): And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

Psalms 46:3 (Parallel theme): Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

Mark 13:26 (Parallel theme): And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

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

Mark 15:33 (Parallel theme): And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

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