

## *Reminders of the End*

The smoke from Canadian forest fires has repeatedly darkened the skies of our country throughout these past several months. As of mid-July, there were nearly 900 fires burning in Canada, over 500 of them were labeled “out of control,” and no one knows when those fires will finally be extinguished. Our weather reports now include air quality alerts, cautioning those with breathing issues to moderate their activities accordingly. Meanwhile, we watch and hope that the winds do not shift back to those patterns we saw some weeks ago when it was actually tempting to put those Covid masks back on just to keep that grit out of our lungs.

Yet because of satellite technology and modern telecommunications, we quickly found out what was going on and why. So, even though we found it irritating (or perhaps, in some cases, a personal health risk and inconvenience), we learned how to adapt and we moved on.

But we haven’t always been so well-informed or prepared to deal with mysterious things around us. I recently came across a YouTube video by “The History Guy” entitled “New England’s ‘Dark Day,’ May 19, 1780.” On that day, as historian Thomas Campanella has written, “A preternatural gloom settled upon the New England landscape, and by noon the sun had been all but blotted from the sky.” Many people at that time saw this as an ill omen, and some looked to the prophecies of the Bible and thought that these signs might indicate the end of the world had come.

Historians still puzzle over what caused this strange phenomenon. Recent theories point to smoke from Canadian wildfires as a likely source of this strange darkness. With no satellites and limited communication available at the time, it was not possible to investigate the cause nor to inform the public as to what was going on, so people were left to make their own conclusions.

Sadly, most people today would likely dismiss the “end of the world” conclusion as “primitive” thinking of a “backward” people. I would suggest adopting a different perspective.

God has said that the world will come to an end. The clouds of smoke we have seen darkening some of our cities may certainly bring some of those Biblical prophecies to mind. To that I say, good!

After all, we’re not in the First Days of this world anymore. The Messiah has come. Jesus has lived, suffered, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. We are now officially in the Last Days, waiting for Him to return to judge the living and the dead. So when something reminds you of that Second Coming and the Last Day, don’t dismiss it. Remember it! Remember what God has said, and use that as a further reminder and occasion for repentance.

But don’t panic. First of all, when Jesus comes again, His return will be unmistakable. You will know that it is Jesus, and there will be no way you will doubt that the End has come.

Second, you have no reason to fear His coming. As baptized children of God who hold fast to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we look forward with anticipation to our Lord’s return. On that Day, all His promises to us will be fulfilled! For us, it is not a Day of terror, but a Day of ultimate joy!

So when you see “signs” in the heavens or on the earth, things that remind you of what the Scriptures have foretold, don’t jump to the conclusion that the world *has* come to its end, but remember that the world *will* come to its end. Remember that you are under God’s care, marked with the sign of Jesus’ cross, and nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Remember what your Savior has promised you, and rejoice in those glories that are yet to come!