

# The Sun, Moon and Stars Go Out

[Mark 13:20-25](#)



Let me begin with a disclaimer; [Berean Bible Church](#) is not all about preterism, we are a Bible teaching ministry. We have been talking about eschatology for the past six weeks and we will be talking about it for a few more. I'm taking my time with these verses because it is important that we understand what Jesus is saying. When Jesus stops talking about eschatology so will we. We just deal with the subject matter of the verses at hand. I'm not ashamed of my eschatology nor do I try to hide it but eschatology is just one branch of my theology. I want to preach the whole counsel of God. I am not a preterist preacher, I'm a preacher whose eschatology is preterism.

I want to begin this morning with a profound quote from J. I. Packer. This quote is worth our understanding and meditation. To understand this quote is to gain a huge advantage in your study of the Bible:

*We do not start our Christian lives by working out our faith for ourselves; it is mediated to us by Christian tradition, in the form of sermons, books and established patterns of church life and fellowship. We read our Bibles in the light of what we have learned from these sources; we approach Scripture with minds already formed by the mass of accepted opinions and viewpoints with which we have come into contact, in both the Church and the world. . . . It is easy to be unaware that it has happened; it is hard even to begin to realize how profoundly tradition in this sense has molded us. But we are forbidden to become enslaved to human tradition, either secular or Christian, whether it be "catholic" tradition, or "critical" tradition, or "ecumenical" tradition. We may never assume the complete rightness of our own established ways of thought and practice and excuse ourselves the duty of testing and reforming them by Scriptures. (J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958], pp. 69-70.)*

Believer, we must test everything we believe by the text. The beliefs you hold must come from the text. And we must be open to allowing the text to shatter our false ideas.

We are working our way through Marks account of the [Olivet Discourse](#). We must remember that in this discourse the Lord is answering the disciple's questions about the destruction of the Jewish temple. As we work our way through this discourse we must fight the temptation to read this as if it was written to us in the twenty first century. Jesus is speaking to His disciples in the first century and we must study it in that context. Audience Relevance is something we must always keep in mind as we read and study the Bible; what did this mean to the original audience? Do you know of any book in the Bible written to the saints in Tidewater Virginia? I don't. [The Scriptures are not written to us! They are for us, but they were not written to us.](#)

***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB)***

The Scriptures are God-breathed and profitable for us but they are not written to us. Thus we must

understand the original intent before we apply them to our lives. Now, as I'm sure you understand it is not always easy to find out exactly what the original intent of the author was; we are separated from the original audience by thousands of years, by culture, by history and by language. But if we do our homework and compare Scripture with Scripture we can get a good idea of the authors original intent.

We saw in our last study that our Lord told the disciples that they would see the "Abomination of Desolation" spoken of by Daniel, which Luke explained as Jerusalem surrounded by armies, and when they did there would come a time of "Great Tribulation":

***"For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall. (Mark 13:19 NASB)***

We looked at this verse in depth last week and we saw that the "Great Tribulation" is past. Sorry to disappoint you but it is over, it happened 2,000 years ago. It was the destruction of Jerusalem as the context of this and the parallel gospel accounts makes abundantly clear. According to Luke's record Jesus said:

***because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (Luke 21:22 NASB)***

This is a very significant verse. Jesus tells us here that ALL things which are written will be fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. What does He mean by that? "***All things which are written,***" refers to all prophecy. **All prophecy** was to be fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. This makes [the destruction of Jerusalem](#) in A.D. 70 a very significant event for all Christians. Everything that was ever prophesied to happen was fulfilled in Jerusalem's fall. Please consider the weight of this statement!

Jesus said, there will never be anything to equal this tribulation that was soon to come upon Jerusalem. Our Savior wept at the foresight of these calamities, and as we read the accounts of Josephus it is almost impossible to keep from weeping ourselves. [Josephus](#) said, "*To speak in brief, no other city ever suffered such things, as no other generation from the beginning of the world was even more fruitful of wickedness.*"

***"And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days. (Mark 13:20 NASB)***

Josephus computes the number of those who perished in the siege at eleven hundred thousand, besides those who were slain in other places: and if the Romans had gone on destroying in this manner the whole nation of the Jews would certainly, in a little time, have been eliminated. The word "**saved**," here is not a reference to eternal life but to physical deliverance. Had the war gone on much longer no one would have been left alive. "***But for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days.***" The word "elect" here is from the Greek word [eklektos](#), [ek-lek-tos] which means: "picked out, chosen." And the word "chose" is the Greek word [eklegomai](#), [ek-leg'-o-my] which means: "to pick out, choose, to pick out or choose out for oneself." This seems rather redundant unless God is trying to make a point. The point being that God chooses men and women to be objects of His mercy.

The doctrine of election is hard for man to accept. It's hard for man to acknowledge that his salvation is an act of God. In his fallen state, he wants to assume some responsibility, even if it's a small responsibility, for having believed. He wants some **credit** for having made the right choice. The

doctrine of election is repulsive to proud man because, by our standards, it seems unfair that God should, out of all the human beings, choose some at his own discretion to be saved and not the rest. Man, in his fallenness, wants a part because he wants to exercise his pride!

Calvin says, "We shall never be clearly persuaded, as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the wellspring of God's free mercy until we come to know His eternal election, which illumines God's grace by this contrast: That He does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation but gives to some what he denies to others."

Election is a doctrine taught all through the Scriptures. God chose Israel. God wasn't sitting up in heaven saying, "I hope some nation will believe in me and choose me." God says, "I choose you because I love you."

***"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 14:2 NASB)***

The nation, Israel, was elect, chosen by God. **Why?** Because God willed it. Do you have a problem with that? Why Abraham? Did God choose him because he was a godly man? No! Abraham was a pagan moon worshiper when God called him. Why did God choose you? I cannot, no matter how hard I look, discover any kind of reason in myself why I should be a partaker of Divine grace. I am a Christian only because Christ Jesus chose me and drew me to Himself. It was His will not mine that made me His child. The "why" rests in God's will. God doesn't call the **good** people because there isn't any.

I believe the doctrine of election, because I am quite certain that, if God had not chosen me, I should never have chosen Him; and I am sure He chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards; and He must have elected me for reasons unknown to me, for I never could find any reason in myself why He should have looked upon me with special love.

It is clear from the Scriptures that the nature of our election rests in God's sovereign choice. If you are a Christian it is because God has chosen you to be a recipient of His marvelous grace. God's choice is based only on His will and not anything that we do or have done. Romans nine makes this clear:

***For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." <sup>16</sup> So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. (Romans 9:16 NASB)***

Who do we thank for our salvation?

***But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13 NASB)***

We thank God because it is because of His choice that we are Christians. God gets all the glory. Let's go back to Mark:

***"And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days. (Mark 13:20 NASB)***

***"The elect"*** is a well known designation in Scripture for Christians. God shortened the days of vengeance for the Christians sake. Through the fury of the zealots on one hand, and the hatred of the Romans on the other, and partly through the difficulty of enduring in the mountains without houses or provisions, everybody would have been destroyed either by the sword or by famine, if the days had not been shortened. But providentially, the days were shortened.

Josephus said, Titus himself was desirous of putting a speedy end to the siege, having Rome, and the riches and the pleasures there, before his eyes. Some of his officers proposed to him to turn the siege into a blockade, and since they could not take the city by storm, to starve it into a surrender: but he thought it not becoming to sit still with so great an army and he feared lest the length of the time should diminish the glory of his success; every thing indeed may be effected in time, but speed contributes much to the fame and splendor of actions.

The Jews, too, helped to shorten the days, by their divisions and mutual slaughters; by burning their own provisions, which would have lasted for many years; and by deserting their strong holds, where they could never have been taken by force, but by famine alone. By these means, "the days were shortened." Otherwise Jerusalem could never have been taken in such a short time, it was well fortified, and able to sustain a longer siege. The Romans could hardly ever have prevailed but for the factions and seditions within. Titus himself ascribed his success to God, as he was viewing the fortifications, after the city was taken. His words to his friends were very remarkable: *"We have fought," he said, "with God on our side; and it is God who hath pulled the Jews out of these strong holds; for what could the hands of men or machines avail against these towers?"* God, therefore in the opinion of Titus, as well as the inspired writers, "shortened the days."

It wasn't in Jerusalem alone but all over the country that the war waged and had it gone on many of the Christians who fled to the outlying areas would also been in danger.

***"And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, He is there'; do not believe him; (Mark 13:21 NASB)***

Jesus had cautioned His disciples against false christs and false prophets before, but He gives a more specific caution against them about the time of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

***for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray. (Mark 13:22 NASB)***

We learn from Josephus that many such impostors did arise about that time and promised deliverance from God, being persuaded by the tyrants or governors to prevent the people and soldiers from deserting to the Romans; and the worse the Jews situation, the more open they would be to listen to these deceptions, and the more ready to follow the deceivers. Hegesippus, too, in Eusebius mentions the coming of false Christs and false prophets about the same time.

These false christs and prophets were so convincing that if it were possible they would have even deceived the elect. Dositheus was reputed to work wonders according to Origen: *Barchoebabas too,*

*who Jerome saith pretended to vomit flames.*

***"But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance. (Mark 13:23 NASB)***

Christ had warned them about the coming of these false christs and false prophets so when it happened they would not be deceived.

Now please notice carefully the next two verses:

***"But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT,<sup>25</sup> AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. (Mark 13:24-25 NASB)***

Modern commentators generally understand this, and what follows, as the end of the world; but the words "in those days," show, that he is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately following the tribulation just mentioned, and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. We have seen that the tribulation happened in A.D. 67-70 with the destruction of Jerusalem so what ever this verse is referring to happened "in those days."

How are we—twenty first century Christians—to understand these words? What is the first thing we must understand in order to interpret these words correctly? CONTEXT!

Context is king! So what is the context? Is Jesus talking about the end of our solar system? NO! Whatever He is talking about happens in "*those days, after that tribulation*" which we now know is talking about the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. How could anyone get an end of the solar system scenario out of this context?

People come up with an end of the solar system scenario because Jesus talks about the sun, moon and stars going out. And because we are so unfamiliar with the first 3/4 of the Bible we take this language literally. All the language that Jesus and the writers of the New Testament use comes from the Hebrew Scriptures, unfortunately known as the Old Testament. The Mosaic covenant is OLD, meaning replaced by the NEW. But the first three quarters of our Bible are not OLD; meaning replaced and irrelevant and therefore should not be called OLD. Everything taught in the New Testament comes from the First Testament. Paul said:

***"And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; (Acts 26:22 NASB)***

Notice carefully what Paul is saying here. He said that He was, "**stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place.**" Paul is saying everything I am preaching comes from the Hebrew Scriptures so if you want to understand Paul or any New Testament writer you MUST understand the Hebrew Scriptures—the first three quarters of our Bible.

If you are not familiar with the [apocalyptic language](#) of the Scriptures you will not understand what Christ is saying here. If you approach the New Testament's apocalyptic language without recognizing it for what it is, and do not know how to deal with its tone, images, and symbols, you are sure to go astray. Notice the use of apocalyptic language in:

*When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,<sup>2</sup> Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion.<sup>3</sup> The sea looked and fled; The Jordan turned back.<sup>4</sup> The mountains skipped like rams, The hills, like lambs. (Psalms 114:1-4 NASB)*

Did the mountains literally skip? No! This is apocalyptic language. In apocalyptic language, great commotions and judgments upon earth are often represented by commotions and changes in the heavens. This language is not to be taken literally.

So let's go to the Scriptures and see how sun, moon and stars are used other than in a literal way. Where do we start? How about Genesis?

*Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." (Genesis 37:9 NASB)*

Is Joseph's dream about the literal sun and moon and stars bowing to him? How would the sun bow? This may confuse us, but Joseph's father knew exactly what he was saying:

*And he related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" (Genesis 37:10 NASB)*

Jacob, Joseph's father interprets this dream as referring to himself his wife, and their sons who were the heads of the twelve tribes identified as the sun, moon, and stars, respectively. They represented the foundation of the whole Jewish nation. When Jesus, therefore, spoke of the sun being darkened, the moon not giving its light, and the stars falling from heaven, He was not referring to the end of the solar system but of the complete dissolution of the Jewish state.

This apocalyptic language is common among the Hebrew prophets. This idea is seen clearly as we look at passages where mention is made of the destruction of a state and government using language which seems to set forth the end of the world:

*The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. (Isaiah 13:1 NASB)*

In this chapter God is talking about the judgment that is to fall upon Babylon. The word "oracle" is the Hebrew word *massa'*, (mas-saw') which means: "*an utterance, chiefly a doom.*" This introduction sets the stage for the subject matter in this chapter and if we forget this, our interpretations of Isaiah 13 can go just about anywhere our imagination wants to go. This is not an oracle against the **universe** or world but against the nation of Babylon.

*Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. (Isaiah 13:6 NASB)*

*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.<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir. <sup>13</sup> Therefore I shall 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 NASB)*

Now remember he is speaking about the destruction of Babylon but it sounds like world wide destruction. The terminology of a context cannot be expanded beyond the scope of the subject under discussion. The spectrum of language surely cannot go outside the land of Babylon. If you were a Babylonian and Babylon was destroyed would it seem like the world was destroyed? Yes! Your world would be destroyed.

*Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them, Who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold, (Isaiah 13:17 NASB)*

This is an historical event that took place in 539 BC. When the [Medes destroyed Babylon](#) the Babylonian world came to an end. This destruction is said in verse 6 to be from the Almighty, and the Medes constitute the means that God uses to accomplish this task. This is apocalyptic language. This is the way the Bible discusses the fall of a nation. This is obviously figurative language. God did not intend for us to take this literally. If we take this literally the world ended in 539 BC.

In Isaiah 34 we have a description of the fall of **Edom**, notice the language that is used:  
*So their slain will be thrown out, And their corpses will give off their stench, And the mountains will be drenched with their blood. 4 And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree. 5 For My sword is satiated in heaven, Behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, And upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction. (Isaiah 34:3-5 NASB)*

This is Biblical language to describe the fall of a nation. It should be clear that it is not to be taken literally. Lets look at another use of this language:

*The oracle of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. <sup>2</sup> A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies. <sup>3</sup> The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, And clouds are the dust beneath His feet. <sup>4</sup> He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither; The blossoms of Lebanon wither. <sup>5</sup> Mountains quake because of Him, And the hills dissolve; Indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, The world and all the inhabitants in it. (Nahum 1:1-5 NASB)*

The subject of this judgment is Nineveh, not the physical world. This is the way God describes the fall of a nation. If this language describes the judgment of God on nations, why, when we come to the New Testament, the fourth quarter of the Bible, do we make it be the destruction of the **universe**? It is only because we do not understand how the Bible uses this apocalyptic language in the first three quarters of the book.

Ezekiel speaks in the same manner of Egypt:

**"And when I extinguish you, I will cover the heavens, and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, And the moon shall not give its light. <sup>8</sup> "All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you And will set darkness on your land," Declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 32:7-8 NASB)**

The prophet Daniel speaks in the same manner of the slaughter of the Jews by the little horn, the power of the Romans:

***And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. (Daniel 8:10 NASB)***

In the **apocalyptic language**, great commotions and revolutions upon earth are often represented by commotions and changes in the heavens. None of these things literally took place!

Peter used very similar words in Acts 2. Here we find a profound statement made by Peter (a Jew) to a multitude of Jews out of every nation:

***But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. <sup>15</sup> "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; <sup>16</sup> but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; <sup>18</sup> EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:14-18 NASB)***

Let me ask you a couple of questions here. **Who** is Peter talking to? The answer is: men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem. **When** did Peter say this? He said this in the first century. Peter explicitly says, ***"this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel."*** He then explains that what this multitude of Jews was experiencing was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel. Peter is telling this multitude that they (first century Jews) were in the last days and would see the judgment of God:

***'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE, AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. <sup>20</sup> 'THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. (Acts 2:21-20 NASB)***

Notice how this corresponds to what Jesus said in:

***"But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, <sup>25</sup> AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. (Mark 13:24-25 NASB)***

Peter and Jesus use the same language as Joel to speak about God's judgment against the nation Israel.

Milton Terry said, "*From these quotations it is apparent that there is scarcely an expression employed in Matthew and Luke which has not been taken from the Old Testament Scriptures. Such apocalyptic forms of speech are not to be assumed to convey in the New Testament a meaning different from that which they bear in the Hebrew Scriptures. They are part and parcel of the genius of prophetic language.*"

Samuel Hinds (1829) "*It requires but a slender acquaintance with the writings of the Old Testament prophets to enable us to observe the peculiarity. It is not only figurative, but the figures are of the boldest kind, involving analogies so remote, as in some instances to be scarcely discoverable. If revolutions in empires be the subject, the prophetic representation is filled with disturbance of the laws of the natural world, and the sun, moon, and stars, are exhibited in commotion. If a deliverer is promised to the Jews, the prophet expresses the promise by the rising of a star, and the like*" (Hinds, pp. 209-210)

Dr. John Owen (1721) "*Not to hold you too long upon what is so plain and evident, you may take it for a rule, that, in the denunciations of the judgments of God, through all the prophets, heaven, sun, moon, stars, and the like appearing beauties and glories of the aspectable heavens, are taken for governments, governors, dominions in political states, as Isa.14:12-15; Jer 15:9, 51:25. Isaiah 13:13; Ps. 68:6; Joel 2:10; Rev. 8:12; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25; Isa 60:20; Obad. 4; Rev 8:13; 11:12; 20:11.*" (vol. 8, p. 255, in a sermon entitled Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth, preached on April 19, 1649)

We see this apocalyptic language used all through the book of Revelation. I believe that the book of Revelation is an expanded version of the Olivet Discourse. Notice how John used apocalyptic language:

*and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. <sup>14</sup> And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; <sup>16</sup> and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; <sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:13-17 NASB)*

Is this talking about the end of the world in our future? NO! John is dealing with Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70. We can prove this by looking at what Jesus said as He was on his way to be crucified:

*But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' <sup>30</sup> "Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.' (Luke 23:28-30 NASB)*

Jesus was telling the women of His day to weep for THEMSELVES because judgment was going to come upon THEM. In Revelation 6 during the great tribulation which happened in A.D. 67-70 we see them crying out for the mountains to fall on them just as Jesus said they would. This language is

picturing the response of sinful man to the awful judgment of God.

The biblical evidence is overwhelming, the Olivet Discourse in its entirety is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The only things that would make us push any of these events into the future are our own presuppositions. In this vivid picturesque language Jesus is describing Jerusalem's destruction. In A.D. 70 the sun, moon and stars went out in Israel for good. When the tribulation was over physical Israel ceased to exist. God's people were no longer distinguished by physical birth but by spiritual birth alone. The Old Covenant was over and the New fully instituted.

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