

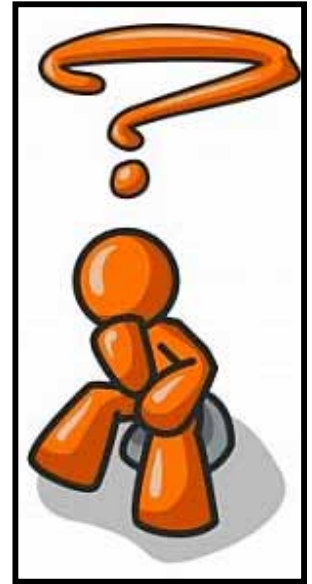
What About...September 23, 2017?

BY DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

What will happen on September 23, 2017?

Answer: NOTHING UNUSUAL!!!!

Kade Hawkins, Director of “Prophecy NewsWatch,” claims, “Revelation 12 and the **Great Sign** is trending as one of the top 5 Bible prophecy searches on Google in 2017” [therevelationsigns.com]. There are many articles on the web saying a significant prophetic event will happen this Fall, September 23, 2017—the Rapture, the Second Coming, the beginning of the tribulation, the end of the world, etc. Here we go again. The “it’s very rare” card was played about the Jupiter Effect in the ‘80s, the Harold Camping prophecies of “The End” on May 21, 2011, and then again on October 21, then there was the Blood Moon Tetrad in 2015. This latest one begins by quoting Revelation 12:1-2, *A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.*



Dr. Danny R. Faulkner from “Answers in Genesis” has a very good synopsis of what this is all about:

On this date, the sun will be in the constellation Virgo (the virgin), along with the moon near Virgo’s feet. Additionally, Jupiter will be in Virgo, while the planets Venus, Mars, and Mercury will be above and to the right of Virgo in the constellation Leo... Virtually all the websites promoting this prophetic sign state that there are nine stars in Leo, but with the addition of the three planets (which appear as bright stars), there are 12 stars. Since Leo is to the upper right of Virgo’s head, one might see this as a crown of 12 stars” [answersingenesis.org, Dr. Danny R. Faulkner, May 1, 2017].

Astrologically

Understand, this is based on astrology, not astronomy nor biblical exegesis. Astronomy does not assign any mystical or predictive significance to the stars or their arrangement in constellations. Neither does the Bible.

First, here’s a few of the scientific problems with the September 23rd idea.

1. Constellation-guide.com says, “Virgo is one of the 12 zodiac constellations, first catalogued by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy in the 2nd century”

[constellation-guide.com]. But if Ptolemy was the first to catalogue Virgo in the second century, how could John’s reference

to a woman in heaven be a reference to Virgo, if Virgo was not a cataloged constellation until the next century?

2. Constellations are grouping of stars from antiquity (Job 9:9; 38:32; 2 Kings 23:5; Isaiah 13:10). But let me ask you something. Can you see a woman in those stars? I sure can’t. Dr. Faulkner, in his article in answersingenesis.org, commented, “Although I am very familiar with Virgo, I have never been able to see a woman in the sky there...I seriously doubt anyone else can either.”

3. The idea is that the Revelation 12 phrase, *on her head a crown of twelve stars*, fits the 9 stars in Leo when the 3 planets Venus, Mars, and Mercury are added this September. But who determines that there are 9 basic stars in Leo? “Astronomy Trek” reports four stars in Leo [astronomytrek.com]. The “Catholic Astronomer” says: “in fact there are scads of stars in Leo and surrounding the ‘head’ of Virgo [http://www.vofoundation]. Tim McHyde cites two authors who claim, “There are already 12 visible stars around Virgo’s head” [https://escapeallthesethings.com/sept-2017].

4. Kade Hawkins claims, “the sign has actually never happened before” [therevelationsigns.com]. The

“Catholic Astronomer” says, “This basic arrangement happened before—in September 1827, in September 1483, in September 1293, and in September 1056 [<http://www.vofoundation>].”

Theologically

Revelation 6–18 describes what Jesus called a great tribulation (Matthew 24:21), which will occupy seven years at the end of this age, before His Second Coming. Chapters 12–14 are the last parenthesis between the trumpets and the final judgment of the bowls full of the wrath of God (15:7).

Revelation 12 begins the parenthesis with a historical review in the form of a sign given to John in heaven, in the midst of his revelation about the great tribulation. This was a sign to John that appeared in heaven, not a sign that will appear in the sky for us. Revelation 12 has nothing to do with anything we will see or should look for in the sky. We are not in heaven before the throne of God, and we are not living in the midst of the great tribulation.

Obtaining dates from stars does not come from an interpretation of any biblical passage. In no sense did the Apostle John, or any biblical author, intend for his readers to be looking for a prophetic event in the stars. The Bible is an inspired book revealing a message, not a mystical book hiding a message. The signs of the times are never signs in the stars. There is no such thing as the gospel in the stars. The gospel is revealed in the Bible.

But God does talk about getting prophetic information from the stars:

- **2 Kings 23:5** *He [good King Josiah] did away with...those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven.*
- **Deuteronomy 4:19** *And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven.*
- **Deuteronomy 17:2-5** *If there is found in your midst, in any of your towns, which the LORD your God is giving you, a man or a woman who ...served other gods and worshiped them,*

or the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host...you shall stone them to death.

Proponents of the September 23 predictions would say that they are not worshiping the stars, but it's too close for comfort. It is giving mystical significance to the creation rather than worshiping the Creator (Romans 1:25). It's the Word of God, not the creations of God, that should direct our path (Psalm 119:97-105; Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Looking for a sign outside of the written Word of God is nothing new.

- **Mark 8:11-12** *The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, “Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”*
- **Matthew 16:1-4** Jesus replied to them... *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah [the death and resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 12:40)]. The sign we are given is the resurrection of Christ.*
- In the Olivet Discourse recorded in **Matthew 24**, Jesus discussed the same tribulation and Second Coming revealed to John in Revelation. He began, saying, *See to it that no one misleads you [in verse 4, then concluded] But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone (verses 35-36).*

The Apostle Paul continued with the same exhortation to look to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ for the leading of God, not mystical or unusual signs.

- **1 Corinthians 1:22-24** *For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified...the power of God and the wisdom of God.*
- **1 Corinthians 2:2** *For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*
- **Galatians 1:6** *I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.*