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Blood Moons—Do They Fulfill Bible Prophecy?

They have seized the public's attention. What does the Bible really say? The answer may surprise you.

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In case you have not yet heard about *blood moons*, here is what's going on.

This past April 15, the first of four unusual lunar eclipses began. They will occur at approximately six-month intervals—the next being October 8, then April 4 and September 28 of next year—and will be visible across North America. Astronomers call this a lunar eclipse *tetrad*. The last tetrad occurred over 2003 and 2004. Eight more such tetrads will occur before the year 2100.

Scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) consider the most notable thing about the current tetrad is the fact that all four eclipses will be visible to most Americans, assuming the weather cooperates.

However, a large portion of the American public is keenly interested in the tetrad for more than the artistry created by night sky astral body dancing.

Two bestselling, prophecy-leaning authors believe the tetrad is directly related to a prophecy found in Joel 2:31: "The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes" (English Standard Version). These two men and their books—*Blood Moons* by Mark Biltz, and *Four Blood Moons* by John Hagee—have received widespread media attention because of the fervor and alarm they have created among religious-minded people.

Is it possible this astronomical event has something to do with dramatic end-time prophetic events? The answer may surprise you.

Why Blood Moons

Science-oriented Internet sites were inundated with questions about prophecy related to blood moons. "We're not experts on prophecy of any kind," wrote EarthSky in April. "But we'll tell you what we know about the new definition for blood moon that has raised so many questions recently" (April 24). It explained that John Hagee and Mark Biltz apply the term *blood moons* to the 2014-2015 tetrad, and credited Hagee for popularizing the term in *Four Blood Moons*. "This book, published in 2013, is apparently what launched all the questions to our astronomy website about blood moons," EarthSky wrote. "We confess. We haven't read it."

Why do both men call such a lunar eclipse a "blood moon"? Astronomers don't tend to use the term. Neither does it appear in the Bible.

Hagee and Biltz most likely use it because a total lunar eclipse makes the moon appear a shade of red, ranging from a dusty brown to an orange or coppery color.

The phenomenon is a natural occurrence caused when the sun, Earth and moon line up in space. Science explains why. “The reason stems from the air we breathe. During a total lunar eclipse, the Earth lies directly between the sun and the moon, causing the Earth to cast its shadow on the moon. If Earth didn’t have an atmosphere, then, when the moon was entirely within Earth’s shadow, the moon would appear black and invisible,” says EarthSky. “Thanks to Earth’s atmosphere, what actually happens is much more subtle and beautiful. ... As sunlight passes through our atmosphere, the green to violet portion of the light spectrum is, essentially, filtered out. ... Meanwhile, the reddish portion of the spectrum is least affected.

“What’s more, when this reddish light first entered the atmosphere, it was bent (refracted) toward the Earth’s surface. It’s bent again when it exits on the other side of Earth. This double bending sends the reddish light onto the moon during a total lunar eclipse.”

“On rare occasions, the light reaching the moon is exactly the color of blood, but there is no way of predicting this in advance,” Space.com adds. “So there are no grounds to call any particular lunar eclipse a blood moon until it actually shows its color.”

Solar and lunar eclipses, including the tetrad, are produced by the regular movements of the sun, Earth and moon and are completely predictable. Although a tetrad is rare, one happened just a decade ago, and another is expected in 18 years.

So can we consider this a sign that an earthshaking prophetic event is looming on the horizon? Biltz and Hagee seem to think so. Here is why.

Why All the Hubbub Over Moons

Mark Biltz is founder of El Shaddai Ministries located in Bonney Lake, Washington. John Hagee is founder of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. Both organizations are non-denominational. The two men have met and agree that the tetrad is a warning from God. They see a prophetic correlation between the tetrad and two of God’s festivals outlined in Leviticus 23—the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.

In his book *Blood Moons*, Mark Biltz writes: “In March of [2008], I saw on the Internet an incredible total lunar eclipse over the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. I had read all the Bible verses in Isaiah, Joel, the Gospels and Revelation where the text talks about the moon turning to blood and the sun to sackcloth. I began to ponder the possibilities of tying the eclipses mentioned in the Bible to the possible coming of the Messiah.

“Because I love science and astronomy, I decided to look into the future occurrences of eclipses. ... I remembered that nasa has a list of eclipses that covers 5,000 years I noticed that there were four total lunar eclipses in a row for 2014 and 2015. ... One morning, as I was praying, a thought popped into my head: *Why don’t I compare the dates of the eclipses on the nasa website to the dates on the biblical calendar?* When I did, I was shocked to find that all four eclipses—over both years—fell on the biblical holidays of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. I just about jumped out of my skin.” While researching the connection between tetrads and significant events in Jewish history, he discovered that there had been a tetrad right after Israel became a nation in 1948, and again when “Israel retook Jerusalem in 1967.”

“To me, all these signs, coming together at one time, are potentially the culminating signals that God is closing this chapter of human history,” Biltz writes in the concluding chapter of his book. “This could be the final curtain call before the Great Tribulation mentioned in the Bible.”

Similar Story—Different Book

Hagee’s story is nearly a mirror image of Biltz’s. “Though I had applied the study of the stars relative to the creation and the birth of Christ, I had yet to discover the connection that Pastor Mark had asked me to make: How were the sun, moon and stars linked to the study of prophecy?” Hagee writes in *Four Blood Moons*.

“I searched the Scriptures for a new revelation with that specific question in mind and came to two verses that shouted out to me!” Hagee continues. He then quotes Joel 2:31 and Acts 2:20 (which is the Apostle Peter’s quote of Joel 2:31). Explains Hagee, “The sun, moon and stars are unmistakably connected to Israel and biblical prophecy—and that connection inspired this book. God will use them to light up the heavens with an urgent, top-priority message for all mankind.”

“The history of the world is about to change forever,” John Hagee tells us with confidence, “and God is sending us messages on His high-definition billboard by speaking to us in the heavens—using the four blood moons; the question is ... are we listening?”

Although the two men leave themselves an out—using the words *could* and *possibly*—when reading their books and surfing their websites, it is clear that both are convinced they are on to something big prophetically.

While one might applaud their interest in Bible prophecy, can you *prove* the truth about what they are saying and publishing? History is chock full of people’s prognostications that proved to be profitless.

Is this tetrad the heavenly sign spoken of in Joel 2:31? You can know the correct answer. In fact, the great God that created the heavens, including the stars, sun, moon and Earth, wants you to know the truth about Joel 2:31 and all other

earthshaking prophecies. However, to come to the correct answer, there are several things you must do.

Time Line of Prophecy

Prophecy is a significant part of the Bible. Did you realize that approximately one third of the Bible is devoted to it? The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:20 that the very Church of Jesus Christ is *built* on the foundation of the prophets and their prophetic writings!

The Bible's most important prophetic book is Revelation. This book actually unlocks large portions of the Bible's other prophecies, including the one used by Biltz and Hagee regarding "blood moons."

While the book of Revelation thoroughly stumps most Bible readers, you can understand this mysterious book. After all, God the Father and Jesus Christ revealed it to be understood by His servants (Revelation 1:1).

In 1972, in his booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!* Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, "While the book of Revelation, itself, is a vital key to a large portion of the other prophecies, there are certain keys which open up this book to understanding. One important key is that in Revelation is a story-flow, relating one future event to another in time order—with occasional insets injected into the continuous story-thread." This is a pivotal point to understanding Revelation. And this story-thread, or time line of end-time prophecy, reveals the *timing* of the heavenly signs discussed in Joel 2:31.

The book of Revelation reveals major prophetic events in time sequence using seven seals—discussed in Revelation 6, 8, 9 and 11. In Revelation 1:1, God the Father is revealed as the *originator* of the prophecies locked within the seven seals, and in Revelation 5, Jesus Christ is shown to be the only one who can unlock the meaning of the seals.

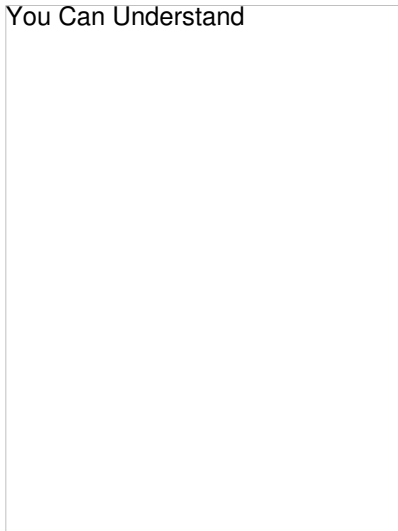
In chapter 6, Jesus Christ begins stripping off the seals—literally opening up to human understanding the sequence of world-shaking events for this end time. Yet the events are given to us in mysterious symbols. For example, the first seal shows a rider on a white horse with a bow and a crown (verse 2). What does this symbol mean?

Symbols are open to all sorts of interpretations—and for generations, people have forced their own human interpretations on them. That is the grave danger for all who desire to teach prophecy. The Bible *interprets its own symbols*—usually in a location different than the chapter you may be reading.

You should read through chapters 6, 8, 9 and 11 at this point to familiarize yourself with these seals. They tell you what will happen on the Earth and *in the heavens* right up until the time of Jesus Christ's Second Coming. However, the symbols do not make the events plain! Don't give up and don't despair—there is another important key you must use.

A Symbol Is Like a Parable

You Can Understand



Free e-book: You Can Understand Prophecy

Mr. Armstrong explained, "And now I want you to realize a most important fact, bearing on our problem, which most of you never realized before. Haven't you supposed, along with nearly everyone else, that Jesus spoke in parables in order to make His meaning clearer—as a sort of illustration, so that people would better understand His meaning? Well, you have supposed wrong! On the contrary, believe it or not, Jesus spoke in parables to cover up, to hide the true meaning from the crowds that constantly followed Him! This knowledge puts in our hands the key that will unlock these symbols of the book of Revelation" (ibid). Study Matthew 13:1-13 to prove what Mr. Armstrong teaches here. Pay particular attention to verse 11.

Did Christ reveal the literal meaning of these strange symbols from Revelation elsewhere in the New Testament? "He did!" Mr. Armstrong answered. "When His disciples came to Him on Mt. Olivet—when they to whom He revealed His parables—they to whom it *was* given to know these mysteries—came to Him *privately*, and asked Him: 'Tell us, when shall these things

be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" Jesus gave in plain language, a startling prophecy of these very world conditions of today, and our immediate future!" (ibid).

In the astounding Olivet prophecy recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, Christ outlined in plain language the seven seals of the book of Revelation. See the accompanying chart for the seven seals and the story flow of the book of Revelation. The Olivet prophecy *highlights* a summary of world events from a.d. 31 until the return of Jesus Christ. You should read all of Matthew 24:1-31 before continuing this article.

The Great Tribulation Next

While you keep in mind what you just read in Matthew 24, there is another key you must understand to truly grasp what Jesus Christ is telling us in these verses and in the book of Revelation.

"I want you to notice a consistent principle in the prophecy of Matthew 24 and of the sixth chapter of Revelation," Mr. Armstrong explained. "Seven successive things, or events, are to occur. As an example: The very *first* condition Jesus foretells is that of false preachers, misleading and deceiving, not the few, but the *many*!"

"That condition set in almost immediately. The Apostle Paul wrote of it, and said this spirit of iniquity was ~~was~~ *already working*, even as he wrote! And it has never relaxed or ceased, but rather has developed in intensity, until ~~the whole world~~, as distinctly prophesied, *has become deceived and misled as to these Bible truths of God!*" (ibid). Mr. Armstrong was referring to the prophecy in Matthew 24:4-5 and Revelation 12:9. Christ's prophecy to His disciples is the *explanation* of the seven seals of Revelation! The first seal is this plague of *false teachers and prophets*.

The second event or condition to set in is ~~war~~ *war* climaxing in intensity today in world war. We are now in the lull between World Wars ii and iii (Matthew 24:7). The third and fourth seals—famine and pestilence—are also included at the end of this verse.

"There is Christ's own explanation of the four horsemen! But this brings us to the fearful present," Mr. Armstrong wrote (ibid). What is the next major prophetic event that will rock this world to its foundations?

In verses 21-22, Jesus discussed the fifth seal, or the Great Tribulation.

Dozens of prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments describe this horrific event. To fully explain the Great Tribulation would take more than one article. However, you can know that religious teachers purporting to understand it are woefully ignorant about what this fifth seal truly means.

Here is a short description: The modern nations of Israel—primarily the United States, Britain and the tiny nation called Israel in the Middle East—along with the sinning saints of God, will suffer great evils during a horrifying 2½-year period—even being conquered by foreign invasion and brought into captivity (Revelation 6:9-11). You can read more about this in our article on page 22.

The Tribulation has *not yet occurred*. However, current world events show that it is at our doorstep!

Only *after* that modern holocaust occurs will we arrive at the *next* major prophetic event described in Revelation.

The Heavenly Signs

Jesus Christ discussed the sixth seal, or the heavenly signs, in Matthew 24:29. This is the same event the Prophet Joel spoke about in his prophecy (Joel 2:31).

For all those willing to listen, here is the Bible answer to the question: *Is this current tetrad the heavenly signs discussed in Joel 2:31?* Jesus Christ tells you, *No!*

Take the time to carefully study verse 29 with Revelation 6:12-17. The heavenly signs—where the sun grows dark and the moon becomes as blood—do not take place until *after* the Great Tribulation.

This event introduces the time period known as the Day of the Lord, which is the seventh seal. This is a ~~separate~~ *separate* event from the Great Tribulation. During this one-year period, God unleashes His wrath on a sinful world in the form of the seven trumpet plagues discussed in Revelation 8, 9 and 11. It is His way of showing all mankind left living that they need to repent of their wicked ways and turn to Him.

Understand that God has a great purpose behind the heavenly signs discussed in Joel 2:31, Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6. Mr. Armstrong explained, "God has warned the world through all His prophets—through His Son Jesus Christ—He is warning the world right now through this very Work [conducted now through the Philadelphia Church of God]. But God is a God of mercy and compassion. He will yet warn this world once again—*by supernatural signs*, in the sun, the moon and the stars. God will leave men no excuse" (ibid).

Notice, the signs in the sun and the moon will be *supernatural signs*, meaning they will be *outside the natural order* of things. The current tetrad is a *natural event* occurring because of the natural, organized movement of the Earth, moon and sun.

Notice also: The tetrad will be seen mainly in the United States. Revelation 6 shows that all men on Earth will be able to see the dramatic heavenly signs that God will display (verses 15-17). So don't be buffaloed by all this talk about blood moons.

However, work hard to understand what the Bible truly says about prophetic events that will dramatically affect your life. You can put your full trust in what the Bible records about the soon-coming climactic world events. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts," encourages the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 1:19). How wonderful that the Old Testament prophets and Christ's apostles recorded all we need to know about prophecy.

This world is growing darker each day. Evils are increasing at lightning speed. At the same time, many are growing more confused by what is happening in our world, what it all means and where it is leading. Yet you don't have to be confused.

You can know what is happening—and *why*. Even more, you can know that a new and wonderful day is about to dawn for all mankind!

Yet, you must be extremely cautious of whom you listen to.

God Wants You to Understand Prophecy

It is a historical fact that God has always worked through a human being to tell people what He was going to do on Earth. God is faithful to reveal His secrets to those people truly serving Him (Amos 3:7). He then requires those people to share that message with anyone willing to listen (verse 8).

Judging by the Old and New Testaments, it would be strange if God *didn't* have someone delivering His prophetic message today (Acts 3:24). It would also be strange *not* to have a multitude of false prophets around.

The major sects of organized Christianity cannot help you understand prophecy. Most of today's so-called Christian leaders reject Bible history and prophecy as an exercise in futility. Few even believe in the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age. That is the main reason you will not hear sermons on prophecy in the great cathedrals and churches of the Western world.

Those scattered voices that *do* focus on prophecy do not agree on what specific prophecies mean. And as we can see, they rely on their own reasoning rather than on Jesus Christ and the Bible to interpret God's prophecies.

Yet, just as He always has, Christ *is* delivering God's prophetic message through His true Church today—the Church He founded and promised would never die (Matthew 16:18). He challenges you to find out whom He is using—who is interpreting the prophecies of the Bible *using the Bible*.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation," warned Peter (verse 20). Be careful what you read prophetically. Believe God and His Word, rather than giving heed to some man who thinks he knows. Then you will be able to follow Jesus Christ's admonition with absolute confidence, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). ■

Prophecy Time Line:

Timeline

