

How the Signs in the Sky Confirm Scripture's End-Times Roadmap

The New Year is a good time for most of us to look ahead. The stars of the zodiacal constellation Aries (The Ram), which are visible overhead in the evening, give a useful roadmap to the future.

Aries itself is a picture of a slain lamb, as attested by the name of its two distinctive stars El Nath (Wounded) and Sheratan (Bruised). However, this is not a picture of defeat, but of victory. This is the Lamb of Revelation 6, found worthy to open the seals of the future. Aries represents the promised victory of Christ.

The defeated enemies of Christ are shown in the constellations Cetus (The Sea Monster) and Perseus (The Breaker). Cetus is a picture of the seven-headed beast of Revelation 13 and 17, representing the nations which have fought against God. The feet of Cetus are in the constellation Eridanus (The River of Fire), a fate promised to God's enemies in Revelation 21. The future of the leaders of the national rebellion against God and the Anti-Christ himself is shown in the constellation Perseus (The Breaker). Perseus is pictured as a man, symbolic of Christ, carrying the severed head of the evil one, as represented by the star Algol (Evil Spirit).

As God has promised to destroy His enemies, so He has promised to restore His chosen people Israel. The nation has suffered much for its rejection of Christ, as pictured in the constellation Andromeda (The Chained Woman). Yet the constellation Cassiopeia (the Enthroned Woman) tells us that God will keep His promise to make Jerusalem the capital of the world (Is 60:1-12).

If you take your binoculars and look directly overhead at about 9:00 PM, you will see the constellation Perseus. Following the westernmost arc of stars in Perseus toward the south you will see the famous Pleiades star cluster, which is part of the Taurus (The Bull) constellation telling of the return of Christ. Just to the west of the Pleiades is Aries, which is recognizable by its two bright stars El Nath (Wounded) and Sheratan (Bruised). Just to the south of Aries are the fairly faint stars of Cetus. And finally, the distinctive "W" of stars in Cassiopeia appears to the north of the Zenith point.

The stars of the Promised Victory are not as bright as the stars of the Second Coming, represented by such bright constellations as Orion (Coming Forth as Light) which are rising in the East. But they tell a beautiful and powerful story, and give us hope that a brighter day is coming.

As a special treat, on December 30 the moon, representing the believers (Psalm 89:37), will cover the bright star Aldebran (The Governor) and part of the Hyades (The Congregated) star cluster. By joining with Aldebaran, picturing the return of Christ in power, and the Hyades, representing the saints returning with Him (Jude 14-15), the Moon conveys the same message that we will join Christ in victory.

In the end, we win. Have a happy New Year. {eoa}

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Why the Incarnation of Christ Is a Model for Our Whole Life

For most of my years in the church I only heard about the need for all men to receive Jesus as their Savior (see John 1:12). But, except for the yearly Christmas message related to the birth of Christ, I do not recall ever hearing a message regarding the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, as found in John 1:14. However, this passage speaks not merely of His birth, but of His entire life on the earth, which lasted more than 33 years!

As Christ-followers, we are not only to bask in the heavenly blessings we receive in Christ as a result of His death, burial, and resurrection (see 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Eph. 1:3), but we are also called to imitate His whole life (see Matt. 5-7). Consequently, the Word becoming flesh provides a missional lesson for the church regarding our need to be immersed in the mission field to which we are called. God did not merely send the Word (ideas or concepts), but embodied the Truth in human flesh. He became flesh to save and serve the ones He was assigned to (see Heb. 2:14-18).

This deeper understanding of the Incarnation obligates us not only to celebrate the birth of Christ during Christmas, but also to present our bodies as a living sacrifice for our divine vocation (see Rom. 12:1-2). Those of us called to at-risk communities are not merely called to “march for Jesus,” but to “move in” for Jesus and immerse ourselves into the neighborhoods of our flock. It is not usually enough for our church building to be in the community; the incarnation compels us to live among the people we are called to.

I tell people all the time that the safest place to be is not some nice affluent suburb, but in the will of God. No matter where you are called to serve, the will of God is always the safest place for your spouse and children (see Ps. 91).

In closing, we in the church need to hear more about the life and times of Jesus, and not just about His birth and the last six hours of His life as He hung on the cross. Why? Because God has provided us with the most effective model for evangelism: the Incarnation.

This is something I never heard preached from a pastor during a Sunday church service.

Alabama Officials Certify Jones as Senate Winner

Alabama officials on Thursday certified Democrat Doug Jones the winner of the state's U.S. Senate race, after a state judge denied a legal challenge by Republican Roy Moore, whose campaign was derailed by accusations of sexual misconduct with teenage girls.

Jones won the vacant seat by about 22,000 votes, or 1.6 percentage points, election officials said. That made him the first Democrat in a quarter of a century to win a Senate seat in Alabama. The seat was previously held by Republican Jeff Sessions, who was tapped by U.S. President Donald Trump as attorney general.

Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill certified the election results at a meeting of the state canvassing board, which also includes Governor Kay Ivey and Attorney General Steve

Marshall.

"I am looking forward to going to work for the people of Alabama in the new year," Senator-elect Doug Jones said in a statement, calling his victory "a new chapter for our state and the nation."

Moore declined to concede defeat even after Trump urged him to do so.

A spokesman for Merrill said an Alabama judge denied Moore's request to block certification of the results of the Dec. 12 election in a decision shortly before the canvassing board was to meet.

Moore's challenge alleged there had been potential voter fraud that denied him a chance of victory. His filing on Wednesday in the Montgomery Circuit Court sought to halt the meeting scheduled to ratify Jones' win on Thursday.

Janet Porter, a spokeswoman for Moore's campaign, told CNN in an interview on Thursday that the challenge aimed to ensure that votes were properly counted.

Regarding the claim of voter fraud, Merrill told CNN that more than 100 cases had been reported. "We've adjudicated more than 60 of those. We will continue to do that," he said.

A day after the election, Merrill said it was "highly unlikely" that Jones, 63, would not be certified as the winner.

Seating Jones will narrow the Republican majority in the Senate to 51 of 100 seats.

Republican lawmakers in Washington had distanced themselves from Moore and called for him to drop out of the race after several women accused him of sexual assault or misconduct dating back to when they were teenagers and he was in his early 30s.

Moore has denied wrongdoing and Reuters has not been able to independently verify the allegations.

Reporting by Keith Coffman in Denver, Katanga Johnson, Letitia Stein in Detroit, Jon Herskovitz in Austin and Makini Brice in Washington; Editing by Meredith Mazzilli, Bill Trott and David Gregorio

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Can We Have Values and Virtues in a Post-Christian Culture?

In response to the revelations of newly enabled #MeToo victims and advocates, highly-paid and award-winning actor Matt Damon believes we must acknowledge a “spectrum of behavior” in our current national discussion about sexual misconduct.

Apparently, that is why Hollywood celebrities can praise the “sexual revolution,” ignited by Hugh Hefner, while at the same time decrying the sexual harassment and predatory practices of Harvey Weinstein.

Judeo-Christian values are not mere opinions, which change with the times, so we can be on the “right side of history.” Rather, these historically recognized values and virtues are biblically based and not quickly modified.

Personal preferences can help guide our liberties and lifestyles, but the common values of our culture should come from immutable “thus says the Lord” passages of Scripture. Our personal beliefs, norms and practices should flow from there,

whether supported by public laws and regulations or not.

If we have devolved, as a culture, to where we are now living in a “post-Christian” era, we need to first seek repentance and reformation in the House of God. The Bible says the last days will be characterized by professing believers who have “itching ears” and only want to hear affirmation of their selfish standards and sinful lifestyles (2 Tim. 4:3).

Spiritual shepherds need to prophetically exhort us and teach us Scripture’s holy expectations. Only then can spiritual renewal begin in our places of worship and homes (1 Pet. 4:17-18)—which will, again, transform our culture, for the good of all.

One positive place to begin may be to pro-actively seek to re-create a culture of marriage in our families and churches, for others to see its godly effects and good benefits.

For instance, I believe we need to find and affirm contributing factors to modern, God-centered, biblical marriages and families. Then, having recognized these factors, we need to see that they are enhanced and celebrated in our churches.

Consider these seven areas of focus:

1. Elementary-aged children are especially open to the love of God and many make their lifetime commitment to Jesus during these years. Children from single-parent homes need our special love and effort so they can find Jesus to be their constant companion and friend. Also, those in blended families often face emotional challenges and scars. How can our teaching times and mentoring efforts help them learn and experience biblical values and views?

2. Teens in our churches face changing emotions and raging hormones. How can our families and churches positively help, so their self-esteem and sexual standards will conform to

their commitment to Christ? Young adolescents will often make lifelong decisions, the ripples of which can never be known until we all get to heaven. Churches must give time and treasure to help mold their lives and futures for the Kingdom.

3. College-age and young adults are often idealists and personally challenged about greed and consumerism, while others are content to watch videos about it on their iGadgets. These 18- to 29-year-old disciples of Jesus need to be taught about spiritual gifts, to enable them to serve and lead in the Body of Christ. Prolonged adolescence needs to be challenged and kingdom-usefulness encouraged.

Also, in this critical age-range, they need to be taught biblical principles about mate selection and about becoming the kind of person that is someone else's "answer to prayer."

4. Pre-marrieds face our culture's expectation that they will live together before marriage. Add to that their natural sexual drives and even committed Christians often succumb to what the Bible plainly condemns as "fornication" (Heb. 13:4). I believe this is often accentuated by delayed commitment, long engagements, and prolonged adolescence.

My wife and I used to teach, along with several other elder-couples, in a series of classes which were required for all getting married, at our church. Couples from other churches often attended, as well, since (like many churches) their church had no pre-married classes available, to help in this critical period. While each couple was different, we tended to counsel for a long relationship, but a short engagement. The sexual tension is just too great, for many couples (1 Cor. 7:9).

On the other hand, the clarity of biblical teachings and confrontation with personal imperfections caused many to "dis-engage" during the series of classes. I often relayed this pithy advice: "I'd rather be single, wishing I were married,

than to be married, wishing I were single.”

5. Weddings are to be more than elaborate, bank-breaking, cultural events. They are to be the place of public commitment of a man and a woman to a lifelong, covenantal relationship with God. Weddings, ultimately, are to serve us as an earthly expression of the Bride of Christ and our heavenly Bridegroom (Rev. 19:5-9). Because it is a serious matter, the minister warns, “What God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Malachi 2:16 declares that God hates divorce. These are harsh words, but divorce harshly affects not just the husband and wife, but any children who may come from the relationship, as well as both of their extended families—for generations!

As pastors and congregants, we must do all we can to re-establish a “culture of marriage” that will encourage, celebrate and protect marriages, along with the generations which follow after them.

6. Newlyweds need to practically learn how to love, respect and admire each other. This takes time, commitment and effort! In the Old Testament (Deut. 24:5), the newlywed man was exempted from going to war for the first year, so he and his bride could establish their home properly.

A modern “honeymoon season” can be enhanced by fellowship and relationships with other newlyweds in their local church, who are learning the same lessons! But after that first year or so, newlyweds need to find places to serve others in their local church.

This maturing and selfless service may be the time to volunteer in children’s ministry areas, to gain a sense of holding, handling and relating to babies, toddlers and preschoolers!

7. Married couples need relationships with other believing couples to help mold their attitudes and actions, as they

learn to establish a loving, safe and godly environment in their homes.

As their families grow, church couples can benefit from specialized classes, seasonal events and spiritual retreats. Some churches even have family camps, where family members can experience faith and fun together, as they bond with each other and blend with other families in a growing culture of marriage.

Many believe that the rise and fall of individuals, families, businesses and governments can all be traced to the success or failure of marriage in a society. The accelerated acceptance, by many, of the liberal agenda to “fundamentally transform” our American culture from its Judeo-Christian foundations to a fully secular, sexualized and anti-religious society is both alarming and alerting.

We must respond to this “post-Christian” crisis by committing to recreate a God-centered culture of marriage—one family and one church at a time!

Meet the New Christian College That Plans to Completely Revolutionize Higher Education

A well-known Boston businessman is planning to open a new four-year college in the east coast city that will focus on conservative Christian values.

Investment fund manager Finny Kuruvilla has said that he plans to fund Sattler College with \$30 million of his own money. The Harvard-educated Kuruvilla will utilize online learning platforms and is set to offer enrolment at a fee of \$9,000—a fraction of the money that many private colleges are now charging their cash-strapped students.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of this story from our content partners at Faithwire.

MercyMe Releases Touching Love Song About the Holy Spirit

MercyMe's latest single is a love song dedicated to a surprising subject: the Holy Spirit. Lead singer Bart Millard shares how the Holy Ghost has driven out all fear from his life, building to a powerful crescendo. This video highlights the song's powerful lyrics.

How to Make Your Decisions From a Blessing Mindset

Apostle Tom Hamon says it's time for believers to shift into a mindset of blessing and seize their inheritance. He uses the

story of the Israelites at the Jordan River to illustrate his point.

Francis Chan: My Church Saved 100 People—and That's a Failure

One hundred people saved in one year is not a success if it took 4,000 people to do it. That's Francis Chan's point in this sermon, in which he addresses why megachurch statistics don't impress him and what a truly efficacious church should look like. As Chan says, "You would fire someone with an army that big that's producing that little a result."

5 Things You Should Never Say to Your Kids

There are a number of different things you never want to say to your children. Here are five important things we think you should *never* tell them:

This article originally appeared at .

After Finding Jesus, Crooked Cop Reconciles With the Man He Framed

Crooked cop Andrew Collins framed Jameel McGee, an innocent man, for possession of crack cocaine. McGee spent three years in prison and even missed the birth of his son. Years later—after losing his position and finding Jesus—Collins met McGee again. What happened next was an incredible testimony of forgiveness. They tell their full story to I Am Second.