

The Comet

#0658

Study by W.D. Frazee—October 30, 1965

Most people get to see a comet at least once in their lifetime. I suppose some of you saw Halley's comet back in 1910. Didn't you? How many remember that? Yes. Well, all of you who remember that are out of the junior department.

Those of you who haven't seen a comet, if tomorrow morning is clear and you look up there in the east a couple of hours or so before sunup you may see a band of light. It looked to me this morning as I viewed it something like one would expect from one of these floodlights pointed toward the sky. You have seen those, haven't you? Well, that is about the way it looks. Of course, it was interesting. I got to thinking about it and I thought we might like to study it this morning. The text is the 13th verse of Jude.

Jude, you know, is almost the last book in the Bible, just before Revelation. Jude was one of the early apostles and he felt moved by the Holy Spirit to warn the church about some matters, and so this little epistle is an epistle of admonition and warning about certain kinds of people.

We will read beginning with the tenth verse and we will get to the comet in the thirteenth verse.

"But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" Jude 10-11.

That is Korah.

“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” Jude 12-13.

And the commentary says that Jude was doubtless referring to comets when he used this last figure. Wandering stars.

There are several kinds of stars, you know. There are what we call the fixed stars like our Taurus, the stars of Orion, the North Star. They are suns like our sun. Great bodies far in space. And it is presumed that many of them, perhaps all of them for all we know, have worlds whirling around them just as our world goes around the sun. At any rate they are luminous bodies way out there in space.

And then there are stars that we call the planets such as Venus, that beautiful evening star that is visible now. And Jupiter which you may observe overhead in the morning. The brightest object in the morning sky. There are other planets such as Mars which they tried to take some pictures of you a few months ago. Well, all these planets are worlds of various sizes. Venus is about the size of this world. Jupiter is 1300 times bigger. So there are various sizes. But like our world they go around the sun. They are not self-luminous. That is, they do not shine of themselves. They do not give light. They reflect light. So the only reason they shine is that the light of the sun shines on them and is reflected back to our eyes.

So those are the two great kinds of objects that we see in the sky. The fixed stars which shine of themselves with light like our sun, and these planets or worlds which go around the sun. They are much closer to us and to the sun as these other stars. And they do not shine of themselves, they reflect light.

But now what is a comet? Well, a comet is an interesting mixture of ice, gas, and matter of various kinds. It travels in an interesting path. Halley's comet is so named from the man that back in the past century observed it and with infinite patience calculated its path and when it would return again. He said it would come back in 1910. Most people said that he didn't know what he was talking about and that he put the date so far ahead that nobody could check on him. He would be dead by that time. Of course, he was dead when it came back. But it came back alright. It came back in 1910.

But not all comets are as dependable as Halley's comet. Some of them seem to break up. What they are is a mass of matter that swings from way off in space, comes near the sun, and as it comes near the sun it gets intensely hot it is going so fast and the gas in there glows. I understand that the gas in the tail of that comet is so rare, the

molecules are so far apart that it is a more perfect vacuum than any vacuum man has ever made in this world. But that gas glows partly reflecting the light of the sun, and partly glowing gas. This is what we see out there in the morning sky.

Now this comet will proceed in its journey and the astronomers don't know whether part of it will break up as other comets have or whether it will eventually get back. The point is—it is a wandering star.

For ages men have steered by the stars. Mariners sailing over the ocean have observed the north star and other constellations and have guided their ships by the stars. But a comet would hardly be anything to steer by because wherever it is, it wasn't, and where it is, it won't be. And that is why Jude says "wandering stars."

Also, another thing about a comet entirely different from these stars both the fixed stars and the planets, the comet is not going to shine very long. Jupiter, the ancient people saw it. It was named long long ago. Mars, Saturn, Mercury, and then all the stars above. Arcturus, and Polaris, and Vega, and Denna, and Capella. All those other beautiful stars. We can look up there and we can see them as Abraham saw them. But the comet, you see it today, and a little while it is gone, and that is it.

Now the Bible tells in Daniel the twelfth chapter and the third verse of something quite different from a comet. You will be interested in this. When you look at this verse I want you to see if you can find in it the word that was in the verse in Jude.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" Daniel 12:3.

What is it? For ever. That is right. For ever. But oh what a different for ever. So the soul-winners, God's soul-winners, will shine like what? Like comets? Like the stars. How long? For ever and ever.

Now you will notice a marginal reading on that Daniel 12:3. What does it say there under wise? Teachers. They that be teachers shall shine. A soul-winner is a teacher. And every teacher ought to be a soul-winner. A soul-winner is somebody who teaches somebody else the way of life. Did somebody teach you the way of life? Yes. It may have been your parents. It may have been your Sabbath-school teacher. It may have been a Bible-worker, a colporteur, a minister. It may have been some faithful lay member that loaned you literature, or came to your house and prayed with you. But every one of us owes his presence here this morning to the fact that somebody, perhaps several somebodies, labored and worked for us and taught us either by word or by example.

Am I correct?

Alright. Now every one of those teachers that has had a part in bringing the light to us is one of God's stars. And you and I as we accept the light, God wants us to be stars too. He wants us to let the light shine to others. And remember, dear friends, the only kind of light that you and I have is that which is reflected. We have no power to originate light. We are reflectors.

We are the planets. We are like Venus, and Mars, and Jupiter. If we will look at the Son, the Son will shine on us and we can reflect that light. That is the way we shine. That is the way every soul-winner shines. That is how we are going to shine all through eternity joyfully and joyously reflecting the light of the face of Jesus through the ceaseless ages. Won't it be wonderful, friends? Yes.

But now watch, as true teachers shine as stars, false teachers are like these comets. That is why Jude says "they are wandering stars." Let's go back to Jude. I want you to see something there.

"... wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" Jude 1:13.

But somebody says, "They sure shine."

Yes, they shine. How long? That is the question, my dear friends. And oh, it is too bad that every time some spiritual comet comes along, some religious wandering star, many people get excited and forget all about the fixed stars. They forget all about the stars that have been shining for ages. They are off after that new one. Why, it is marvelous. It is wonderful.

Let me read you an inspired comment from Volume 1, page 414.

"There are wandering stars professing to be ministers sent of God who are preaching the Sabbath from place to place, but who have truth mixed up with error and are throwing out their mass of discordant views to the people" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, page 414.

Just like that comet. It throws out a great mass. And oh, what a glowing mass it is. And of course people are looking at it. Well, it is something to look at, but I wouldn't want to follow it. Would you? Oh no.

Now let me read this sentence again.

"There are wandering stars professing to be ministers sent of God who are preaching the Sabbath from place to place..."
Ibid.

Well, they must be alright if they are preaching the Sabbath. Aren't they? Not necessarily. Does a comet have some light? Oh yes. It has some light alright, but the trouble is, dear friends, as I said a while ago, wherever it is, it won't be there long. It is nothing you can count on. Nothing you can depend on. Nothing to guide you.

“There are wandering stars professing to be ministers sent of God who are preaching the Sabbath from place to place, but who have truth mixed up with error and are throwing out their mass of discordant views to the people. Satan has pushed them in to disgust intelligent and sensible unbelievers” *Ibid*.

Then it goes on. This is talking about a special situation back there over a hundred years ago. This particular situation, these that she was speaking of had a great deal to say about the gifts, about the Spirit. About the gift of tongues and other things of that kind. They were quite worked up over that. You can read about it in Volume 1 page 414.

Spiritual comets, wandering stars. But like all comets, they ran their course rather soon and that was it. No more light.

Another comet. Volume 1, page 327. Here she is speaking of some teachers who were causing distraction and division by teaching sentiments contrary to the body, that is to the church.

“Such are wandering stars. They seem to emit a little light; they profess and carry along a little truth, and thus deceive the inexperienced. Satan endows them with his spirit, but God is not with them; His Spirit does not dwell in them. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one, as He is one with the Father, “that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” The oneness and unity of God’s truth-believing remnant people carries powerful conviction to the world that they have the truth, and are the peculiar, chosen people of God” *Ibid*, page 327.

Watch, folks. I am touching a very important thing. It is far more important than that comet over Lookout Mtn this morning.

“This oneness and unity disconcerts the enemy, and he is determined that it shall not exist. The present truth, believed in the heart and exemplified in the life, makes God’s people one, and gives them a powerful influence” *Ibid*.

What is the influence of this movement? It is in unity. Unity on the truth. And remember, friends, truth is eternal. But while, thank God, there are those who are content to walk in the light of the sun and the fixed stars, there are others who are restless. They are taken with some new teacher that comes along with some bright spectacular ideas that glow like the comet. They say, “There is light. There is wonderful light.”

But these teachers, as you notice here it says, they cause division. That is one

of the marks of the false. They cause division. That is what Jude was talking about.

“Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion,...” Jude 1:8.

What does dominion mean? Government. Control. They don’t want control. Like the comet, they may come around and shine, but look for them a little later and where are they? Way off in space somewhere. Wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. So brethren and sisters, God would warn us against that which causes schisms and division. And even if it seems to bring some light, bring careful.

I know where to get some light that will never cause any confusion as to direction. I can get some light in the daytime from the sun. Can’t you? And it is always where it is supposed to be. And at night if I needed guidance there are hundreds of fixed stars up there that are always where they are supposed to be. I don’t have to take out after a comet however brightly it may glow at the moment.

Ah, but somebody says, “Isn’t there new light to come to the people of God?”

Any light that is really light, friends, will be in harmony with all the light that God has revealed in the past. Won’t it? Yes. I tell you another thing. It won’t really be new. Somebody might see it. How many of you found the Sabbath after you had grown to adult life. May I see your hands? What was that to you? New light. Was it really new? Why no, it was as old as creation. Do you see what I mean, friends?

God is light and God is eternal. Our conception of truth may increase from time to time just as astronomers may discover new stars from time to time. But whenever what purports to be new light upsets and disturbs that which God has already demonstrated to our minds to be eternally true, then we need to have serious questions.

But beyond that there is something even more important. Don’t miss it in what I just read from Volume One. Let me go over it. The servant of the Lord says about these wandering stars, these teachers:

“They seem to emit a little light; they profess and carry along a little truth” *Ibid*.

Well, what is the matter with them? They cause division. Schism. Even truth is not to be taught in a way that sows discord and schism all through the body of the Lord. Jesus said to His disciples:

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” John 16:12.

The apostle Paul, taught personally by Jesus many things that concern the welfare of the church was careful to work in a way to build up the unity of the church. He wants us all to do that today.

May I speak a word of warning? I hadn't intended to say this, but it comes from my heart as I think about this comet. You know, we are living in a day when communications are very easy. It is easy to get a mimeograph machine or something like that and just turn out literature as we say at the drop of a hat. Another thing that is very easy to communicate with is tape recorders. There are hundreds, literally thousands of people today with tape recorders both to record and to play.

Well, like every other invention, these mimeographs and tape recorders, they have their place. But just as with radio and television and the newspapers, so with the mimeograph and the tape recorder. Satan has not been asleep. He has not been idle. And I want to tell you something, friends, it is too bad whenever the people of God are so interested in something strange, something new, something wonderful that nobody has heard about yet before that they spend their time and their money in dealing with those things rather than the great eternal truths which God has given to this movement to give to the world. I would like to stress it.

Be very careful that you don't follow a comet because it is a wandering star, and while, as this says, it may emit some light, eventually it leads away. It leads away. And when it does, by that very thing it shows that it is not something that God wants you and me to follow.

What did the angel tell the Lord's messenger over and over again in the history of this movement? Press together. Not long ago I heard of a minister, he preaches the Sabbath all right, but he preaches about certain periods of time that have to come between now and the coming of Jesus. He takes some of the prophecies of Daniel and brings them on down here to our time and says it is going to be just so long from one event to another.

Is that the teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist church? Never, my friends. Never. And it flatly contradicts the testimony of the Lord's messenger that the prophetic periods all ended when? In 1844.

Why are these wandering stars of such interest? We need to examine our hearts, friends, whenever these things come along. If there is anything in us that responds to that sort of thing, we need to get down on our knees and say, "Dear Lord, help me not to be so taken with these comets. Help me to be more interested in fixing my eyes on the settled stars that have been there since creation and will be there a million million years from now.

Let's keep in our minds the difference between Jude 13 and Daniel 12:3. Let's be among the stars that shine for ever and ever instead of the wandering stars to whom

is reserved the midst of darkness forever. What do you say, friends?

Now I want to go to the 14th of Isaiah and we will see where all this thing started. Isaiah 14 beginning with the twelfth verse. Here is some more about the stars. Here you will see somebody that was once a fixed star and became a comet. And oh what a brilliant sight he made. A comet can be brilliant too. But what have we seen is the nature of the comet? What happens? It goes. It is gone. The other stars they shine on.

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer...” Isaiah 14:12.

What does the margin say? O daystar. Was Lucifer a star? Yes. The brightest star in God’s firmament. Think of it, friends, a beautiful glorious star! Could he have been shining yet? But now let’s see what happened.

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend...” Isaiah 14:12

What does ascend mean? Go up. He was already up. But he wanted to do what? Go higher.

“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne [Where?] above the stars of God”

He was going to be a superstar, wasn’t he? And he exploded and became a comet. Ever since then he has been a wandering comet to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now a comet draws with it in its tail a great mass of matter. Did this dragon have a tail too? And his tail drew what? One-third of the stars of God. I want to tell you something, friends, they didn’t lose all their light, and all their beauty, and all their wisdom the minute they left heaven. Like the comet, they have been shining on with a certain amount of that reflected light. And so when the Devil or his angels either directly or through human agents reveals certain light, certain beauty, certain sparkle, remember, it is like the comet. But remember, it won’t last. It is only for a time.

So we are not to be dazzled by it. We are not to be enamored. We are not to follow it. Lucifer was once a beautiful star but he became a fallen star. A comet. And is he finally going out? Going to pieces? He will all be gone. The blackness of darkness forever.

Now there is still another lesson I would like to have us get from this comet this morning. Will you repeat with me that twelfth chapter of Daniel and the third verse again?

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” Daniel 12:3.

Do you know why these stars of our solar system like Mars, Jupiter, and Venus keep on shining year after year, decade after decade, century after century, millennium after millennium? I will tell you why, friends. They are always in there place. They are moving, it is true, all creation is in motion, but they are moving in their appointed orbits. They never get outside of that.

You don’t wake up some morning and say, “Where is Jupiter this morning?”

“I don’t know. It doesn’t seem to be up there this morning. I wonder what happened to it.”

Somebody finally reports, “Oh, I saw Jupiter.”

“Where is it?”

“Oh, it is way off here some where this morning.”

“I wonder what it is doing?”

“Oh well, it got an idea it wanted something different. It thought of something it wanted to do.”

No. It is right on the job all the time always in its place. Am I correct? God help me to do that, friends. God help me not to be a comet just wandering off here, there, and yonder.

Does God have a job for you to do? And the way to shine like a star for ever and ever is to just stay right in the place of God’s appointment.

I want to read you a little poem. Think about it as you think about the comet.

There is a race of men that don’t fit in, a race that can’t stay still.
So they break the hearts of kith and kin and they roam the world at will.

The range the field and they rove the flood, and they climb the mountain’s crest.
Theirs is the curse of the gypsy blood and they don’t know how to rest.

If they just went straight they might go far, they are strong and brave and true.
But they are always tired of the things that are, and they want the strange and new.

They say, Could I find my proper groove what a deep mark I would make.
So they chop and change and each fresh move is only a fresh mistake.

And each forgets as he strips and runs with a brilliant fitful pace,
it is the steady, quiet, plodding ones who win in the lifelong race.
And each forgets that his youth has fled, forgets that his prime is past
till he stands one day with a hope that is dead in the glare of the truth at last.

Paul summed up the secret of his success in God's work in that wonderful little line:

"This one thing I do" Philippians 3:13.

He put it this way in Hebrews 12:1-2.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
Looking unto Jesus" Hebrews 12:1-2.

Having found our course, and thank God we can find it if we are willing, having found our place in God's pattern of life, let's keep at our work. If we are a little star, alright, we will be a little star. If we a larger star, it is alright. But whatever size we are, let's be sure that we are in orbit, not like the comet here this week and way off somewhere else, and I am not talking at the moment about geography although it might include that. OH, my friends, it is wonderful to be fixed in truth. Isn't it? To be fixed in a conviction of the will of God in our life. To have a goal and carry on toward it.

Paul said:

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" Philippians 3:13-14.

This was the spirit that the Savior had. He came down here from heaven, was born into our human family, and there were many things that He might have done, but there was one thing that He did do. He finished the work that His Father gave Him to do. But it wasn't because He was never tempted to be diverted. Satan met Him, you remember, there in the wilderness. He tried in all manner of ways to divert Him. He is trying to divert us. He is trying to divert the remnant people of God. And as we think of that comet catching the attention of the world for a few mornings and then in just a little while it will all be forgotten, but Mars and Jupiter and Venus will be shining on long after it is gone as they were shining long before anybody ever thought of it. Long before it was discovered.

Some amateur astronomer picked this up not long ago in their telescope and now

the scientific world is just so interested in watching, but it will soon be gone. But the great stars, the fixed stars and the planets that stay in their places, they will be right there. Which will you be? A star or a comet?

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