

Reading the Signs

I continue to puzzle over people's capacity for ineptitude. Reading the signs is a particularly relevant example. Some while back, I was headed into the office on a frosty morning and, at one of the main intersections in Odessa, a signal light that functions normally during traffic hours, switched to a blinking light in the wee hours of the morning. As I pulled up behind this particular driver, I stopped and waited, and waited.... Finally, I pulled around, thinking the driver had fallen asleep. Nope, I'm convinced now that she was just sitting there waiting for that blinking red light to change to a blinking green.

Understanding the signs is just as critical on life's road. In Jesus' day, dull spiritual leaders had been ignoring God's Word so effectively that the events surrounding the Messiah's coming had become grossly misdirected. When Jesus hit the scene, many missed the signs. ***"When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas"*** (Matthew 16:2-4). Acute weathermen? Perhaps. Astute children of God? Not even close!

People are still misreading the signs of the times today. All caught up in *Left Behind* and similar such nonsense, coupled with a Jewish or Palestinian fellow kicking dirt on the wrong side of a Middle Eastern borderline, and some doomsday prophet, on the thread-bare "evidence" and fantastic extrapolation of highly figurative Bible verses, works himself or herself into a frenzy; and *voilà*, it's time once again to predict that the sky is falling. They suffer from the same spiritual myopia, as did the Jews of the first century. They sit at the intersection of prophecy and reality in spiritual gridlock, looking for the establishment of a physical kingdom when Jesus said plainly, ***"My kingdom is not of this world"*** (John 18:36).

Jesus' Kingdom exists today, and those who become Christians are translated into it upon conversion (Colossians 1:13). Yet, people are still blinded by the supposed signs that foretell an imminent coming of the Christ in His Kingdom. They can't read the signs any better than the ancient Jews. It's very much akin to sitting at a blinking red light, dead in your tracks, anticipating a Kingdom event that will never happen. Yes, it does try one's patience, ***"but let patience have her perfect work"*** (James 1:4). The proper response to the scriptural traffic jams of misguided travelers on humanity's highway is patience and direction. We must be dedicated to helping the lost soul find his or her way and pointing these "signage challenged" souls to the Bible, moving them forward ***"into the kingdom of his dear Son."***

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