

LESSON - 26

(FOR TWO PERIODS) SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST - III SIGNS

Reading : Matt: 24:3-44; Luke 21:5-26; Mark 13:3-37

Memory Verses : Luke 21:25-27

Theme : To learn about the signs of the Lord's coming and to be prepared for that event.

Introduction: Many wonderful events are happening every day on the earth. But the greatest event to take place in the future will be the second coming of Jesus Christ. It has been emphatically foretold by the Old Testament prophets, Christ Himself, heavenly angels and the apostles. Saints all over the world are looking earnestly forward to that glorious event. No one can fix the date and time of this event (Matt.24:36,42,44,50). But God has revealed to us in the scriptures many signs leading to the second coming. When we study the world events in the light of the scriptures, we can realize that Messiah's coming is at hand.

Towards the close the ministry of Jesus on earth, His disciples requested Him to tell about the signs of His coming and the end of the world. Then He foretold about the calamity that was to be fall on Jerusalem and the Temple. After that He described the signs of His coming and the end of this age. We can divide the signs into four groups.

1) Concerning Israel, 2) Concerning gentiles, 3) Concerning the church and 4) Concerning the universe. Let us study them in relation to the present day events.

1. The flourishing of the Jews (Mark 13:28-30): One of the important indications of His coming is the spouting of the fig tree or the restoration of Israel. Israel has been compared to the fig tree in

many scripture portions (Hos. 9:10; Joel. 1:7; Mark 11:13, Luke 13:6). People of Israel have been uprooted from their land and scattered into many parts of the world because of disobedience of God's commandments. Whatever happened to them was according to the warning given by Moses (Deut.28:62-68). Israelites were totally dislodged from their own land in A.D.135. it happened as foretold in Luke 21:4. They suffered great persecutions in the place to which they were scattered from A.D. 135 to 1948. But as a result of the two world wars, Jews were allowed to settle in Palestine. The nation of Israel was established on May 14, 1948. they are wonderfully flourishing in spite of severe opposition from surrounding nations. In the six – day war which started on June 5, 1967, the city of Jerusalem, the areas on the west bank of Jordan river, Gaza and Sinai up to the east of Suez Canal became part of Israel in a miraculous way. War ended on June 11 after Nasser, the Arab leader resigned of June 9. Jerusalem was declared the capital of Israel in July 1980. all the prophecies regarding the restoration of Jerusalem have been fulfilled (Psa. 102:14-16). The might of the Israeli army, their achievements in science, agriculture and industry – are they not fulfillment of our Lord's statement of the flourishing of the fig tree?

(Read Lessons 26-30 of Class VII).

2. The Status of the nations of the world:

a) Political situation (Dan.2:31-45): Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, saw the vision of a Huge image. Its golden head represented the Babylonian empire its breast and arm made of silver showed the kingdom of Media Persia, its belly and thighs made up of iron and clay stand for the democratic nations which came into being after the Roman empire. God reveled to Daniel that He will establish an eternal kingdom after the time of democratic rulers. The governments that we see today are equivalent to the feet of that image. "They shall not cleave to one another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" (Dan.2:43). It is a realistic description of the situation in our legislative assemblies and governments. The time is soon coming for Messiah, the stone cut out without hands, to shatter all kingdoms and take over the reign of nations.

b) Mental condition of people (Luke 21: 25-26; Matt. 24:10): The Lord told His disciples that people will be in despair and fear.

Their hearts will fail seeing what things are happening to the world. The present condition of people is the same. We see despair, fright and conflict everywhere. Political leaders are apprehensive about their future. The stockpile of atomic weapons can destroy the whole world in a short time. "People will betray one another and hate one another". Individuals families and societies are breaking up.

c) Moral standards: In the days of Noah, God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth (Gen. 6:5-13). Jesus said that the moral standards of man at the time of His coming will be like in the days of Noah and of Lot (Luke 17:26-30). As the comforts have increased, moral degradation has set in. Drunkenness, adultery, robbery, murders, etc. are prevalent these days without much control.

d) Increase of lawlessness (Matt. 24:12; 2Tim. 3:1-5). The Lord and the apostles have foretold that in the last days lawless and perilous days will come. "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors heady, high minded lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Our newspapers are now a days full of incidents which show the above level of people. Forms of godliness like pilgrimages, festivals, religious discourses, etc. are plentifully seen.

e) Mockers of the second coming and other spiritual matters (2Pet.3:3-4): In the days of Noah, men rejected the message from God regarding the flood. Likewise people today, even church leaders scornfully reject the idea of the second of Christ. This is a sign of the end times.

f) Preparations for war (Matt. 24:6) "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars". As the days near the end, wars will be more destructive and extensive. Elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up". The destructive power of atom bombs is because of the immense heat that is generated by the burning of the elements. The destruction caused by atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its after effects are too terrible to be mentioned. Nations are stockpiling atomic weapon for a confrontation. These are preparation for the final battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:14-16; Joel 3: 9-14).

g) Explosion of knowledge and quickness of travel (Dan. 12:4, Nahum 2: 3-4): Knowledge will increase rapidly and people will travel to and for like lightning. The scientific knowledge that has been gained in the last 10 years is more than all the knowledge gathered in the previous centuries put together. Vehicles which travel on the ground and in space at great speeds are signs of the end times.

h) Peace conferences (1 Thes.5:3): People say, peace and safety. But situations are explosive everywhere. More peace conferences are held nowadays than ever before. But peace has remained only a dream.

i) Preparation for the appearance of anti- Christ (2 Thes. 2:3-8): Anti-Christ has to appear before the establishment of the Lord's kingdom. Organizations proclaiming peace and equality are being set up in different places to fool people. The idea of a world government under a single leader as a solution to the problems of mankind is also gaining ground.

3. Religious signs:

a) Pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2;28-30; Acts 2:16-18); The pouring out of the Holy Spirit which started on the Day of Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus Christ diminished during the middle ages, but is being continued for those who submit themselves to God in increasing measure. So great servants of God filled with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit are being raised by God and through them a spiritual revival is sweeping all over the world. This outpouring of the latter rain declares the coming of the Lord.

b) The sign of the midnight (Matt. 25:1-13): In the parable of the ten virgins, we read that all of them got to sleeping when the bridegroom delayed his coming and that when he came at midnight, only those who had oil with their lamps could enter into the chamber with him. The slumbering condition of present day believers reminds us of the return of the Lord. Time has come for the children of God to be awake and store the oil of Holy Spirit so that they can meet the Lord when He comes.

c) Preaching of the gospel (Matt.24:14): The words of Jesus that the gospel will be preached all over the world are being fulfilled these days. In the 15th century, Bible was available only in 14

languages. But now, Bible is distributed in more than 1250 languages. Gospel is being preached through many organizations and through modern communication media like the radio and television.

c) The lukewarm condition of the church (Rev.3:14-21). Messages to seven churches are recorded in Rev. 2 & 3. They represent the conditions of the Church from Pentecost till the end of the age. We are now in the Laodicean period. Christian community now has a large number of people who are self-satisfied, philosophical, materially rich and spiritually blind and poor. These lukewarm people claim to be believers, but question the inspiration of the scriptures and keep Christ locked out.

4. Signs concerning the universe (Luke 21:11; Matt.24:7): statistics show that earthquakes have increased in frequency and cause much greater damages than ever before. While the number of earthquakes in 18th century was 640, it increased to 2119 in 19th century. Many earthquakes have already take lakhs of lives in the 20th century. 1,43,000 people died in Japan in the 1923 earthquake. Even scientists are frightened by many unknown signs and events, which are observed in the universe.

We are clearly seeing all the signs of the second coming of our Lord. He will come soon and gather His Church and judge the world. Our redemption is drawing near. Let us keep ourselves ready in holiness to meet our Lord.

QUESTIONS

1. How are the signs of the Lord's coming grouped?
2. How is the history of Israel related with the second coming of Jesus?
3. Describe the signs in the nations of the world connected with the second advent of the Lord.
4. How does the present conditions of the Church point to the advent of Christ?
5. Describe the evidences in the universe related to the second coming?