

# The Signs of Christ's Coming and the Believers' Attitude toward Christ's Coming

## Message One

### The Signs of Christ's Coming

**Scripture Reading:** Dan. 9:24-27; Rev. 13:1, 3; 17:7-14; 13:14, 15; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 12:5, 11; Rev. 14:1-5; 3:10; Luke 21:36; Matt. 24:39-42

#### I. The coming of Christ is the biggest prophecy in the Bible and the believers' hope of glory.

- A. Prophecies constitute at least two thirds of the Bible, and most of the prophecies in the Bible have to do with the coming of Christ.
- B. This is not only a great subject in the Bible but is also closely related to our future and destiny. It can bring us comfort and hope, and it can also be a reminder and warning to us.
- C. Christ's second coming is not something only those believers who have loved the Lord for many years should care about; it is also something that new believers should know. When Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica which had only been established for a short time, he repeatedly mentioned the second coming of Christ as their encouragement and hope, even ending each chapter of his first letter to them with this matter.

#### II. The importance of knowing prophecies:

- A. Some people think that studying prophecies is only secondary and that such studies will only add to one's knowledge but will not benefit their spiritual life. Such a view is misguided.
- B. Prophecies are things that God wants man to know ahead of time. Peter reminds us in his epistle to give heed to the prophetic word concerning the coming of Christ as to a lamp shining in a dark place, "until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." (2 Pet. 1:19)
  - 1. We should give heed to the prophetic word in the Scriptures which enlightens so that we can receive enlightenment through the shining of the word of the prophets.
  - 2. This word will lead us to a bright sky which is the coming kingdom age. At that time, the Lord will be manifested as the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2) and His light will shine forth, breaking through the darkness of the night of this age.
  - 3. Prior to this, the Lord Jesus will appear as the morning star at the darkest hour in the night (Rev. 2:28; 22:16) to those who are watchfully looking for His appearing.
  - 4. This will cause and encourage us to eagerly seek the Lord's presence and to be watchful so that we will not miss seeing the Lord when He comes like a thief in the secret aspect of His coming (*parousia*). (Matt. 24:42-44; Rev. 3:3)
  - 5. There are two aspects of Christ's second coming: A secret aspect towards the watchful believers, and an open aspect towards the unbelieving Jews and the Gentiles.
- C. Those who heed and seek to understand prophecies are those who have an intimate relationship with God.
  - 1. Enoch was the first one to prophesy (Jude 14-15). He received revelation that the Lord was coming to execute judgment against all. Thus, he feared God in his heart and had the reality of walking with God for three hundred years.

2. When Abraham learned of God's intention beforehand and realized that God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, he petitioned for Lot so that Lot could escape the judgment of fire from heaven, for he was the friend of God (James 2:23).
3. Daniel received visions and recorded prophecies because he was a "greatly beloved man" (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19). He was also an overcomer in that age.
4. The apostle John saw visions on the island of Patmos because he was a beloved disciple of the Lord who had the experience of leaning on the Lord's breast (John 21:20).
5. "The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear Him." (Psa. 25:14) Only those who fear Him, love Him, and seek to satisfy His heart's desire will be given to perceive prophecies and see visions.

### **III. The signs of Christ's coming and the consummation of this age:**

- A. Knowing the seventy weeks apportioned by God (Dan. 9:24-27):
1. The first section is seven weeks: From the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king to the completion of the rebuilding work was a total of forty-nine years. (Neh. 2:1-8)
  2. The second section is sixty-two weeks: From the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the cutting off of the Anointed One (Messiah—Christ) was a total of four hundred and thirty-four years.
    - a. According to this prophecy, during the Passover in the year determined by God, Christ was delivered by the Jews to the Roman officials to be crucified, thus fulfilling this prophecy.
    - b. After this, the seventy weeks is suspended for a long period until the beginning of the last week. This gap is the church age which is also called the dispensation of grace or the age of mystery.
  3. The third section is one week:
    - a. Commencing with the seventh Roman Caesar's establishment of a seven-year covenant with Israel.
    - b. In the midst of the week, after three and a half years, Antichrist will break the covenant and cause the sacrifice and the offering of the Israelites for God to cease. He will also persecute those who fear God. (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 12:14-17)
- B. The appearing of Antichrist and the restoration of the Roman empire:
1. Revelation 13:1 shows us that the beast who signifies Antichrist will come up out of the Mediterranean Sea, and this beast has seven heads and ten horns.
  2. The seven heads of the beast are seven Caesars of the Roman Empire. When John wrote Revelation, the first five had already fallen, the sixth was still living, and the seventh had not yet come (Rev. 17:10). The coming Antichrist will be the seventh one.
  3. He will come from one of the nations around the Mediterranean Sea, and being bolstered by ten kings (Rev. 17:12-13), he will unite them and form a great empire which will become the restored Roman Empire.
    - a. Before the great tribulation, ten kings will arise from the restored Roman Empire. They will be one with Antichrist, resisting and persecuting the people of God.
    - b. These ten kings correspond with the ten toes of the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. (Dan. 2:42)
  4. He will make a seven-year covenant with Israel, allowing them to worship God freely.

5. After three and a half years, Antichrist will be killed. Then, the spirit of the dead Nero, the fifth Caesar, will come up from the abyss (Rev. 9:11) and enter into the corpse of the seventh Caesar, resuscitating him and making him the eighth Caesar. (Rev. 13:3; 17:8-11)
6. He will set up his image as an idol in the temple and will exalt himself above all that is called God, even sitting in the temple of God and calling himself God. (Rev. 13:14-15; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:4)
7. He will trample the holy city of Jerusalem and persecute the believers and the children of Israel for forty-two months which is three and a half years (Rev. 11:2; 13:5-7; 12:4) until the complete destruction that has been determined is poured out on the desolator—Antichrist (Dan. 9:27). Christ will come to the earth and slay him by the breath of His mouth, annulling him by the manifestation of His coming (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:19-20).
8. Today, the whole situation in Europe is progressing rapidly in the direction prophesied by the Bible for the restoration of the Roman Empire upon which Antichrist will appear. Once he ratifies a seven-year treaty with Israel, it will be the beginning of the last week.

C. The restoration of Israel:

1. To the believers, the fig tree's becoming tender and putting forth its leaves is a sign of the end of this age. The fig tree signifies the nation of Israel which is cursed in Matthew 21:19. It passed through a long winter, from the first century A.D. to 1948, when Israel was restored as a nation. This is the fig tree's branch "becoming tender".
2. Twenty years later, in 1967, Israel took back Jerusalem. This is the fig tree "putting forth its leaves", indicating that summer is near and the full restoration of Israel is close at hand. (Matt. 24:32-33)

D. The rebuilding of the temple:

1. During the first three and a half years of the last week, Antichrist will support the Israelites, allowing them to worship God. It is quite possible that they will use this opportunity to rebuild the temple.
2. In the last three and a half years, Antichrist will cause all sacrifice and offering to cease (Dan. 9:27; 12:7), substituting them with the idol of his own image.
3. Hence, the temple must be rebuilt so that the Israelites can render their worship and sacrifices to God and that Antichrist can set up his image in the temple.

E. The great tribulation:

1. The last three and a half years of this age will be a time of great tribulation, such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world until now, nor shall by any means ever occur. (Matt. 24:21)
2. This period begins with the fifth trumpet of the seventh seal (Rev. 9:1-2) and ends with the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:1-21). This is "the hour of trial which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth." (Rev. 3:10)
3. On one hand, God will judge the whole universe with supernatural calamities; on the other hand, Satan and Antichrist will try their best to destroy and harm mankind and to persecute Jews and Christians. (Rev. 12:7-13, 17)

F. The rapture of the overcoming saints:

1. Before the great tribulation, the overcomers will be raptured first, leaving behind the majority of the believers who are not yet mature to pass through the great tribulation on earth:

- a. The martyred, overcoming saints of past generations—the man-child—will be resurrected and raptured to the throne of God. (Rev. 12:5, 11)
  - b. The firstfruits who are living in this age will be raptured to the heavenly Mount Zion. (Rev. 14:1-5)
  - c. The rest of the overcoming believers still living in this age will be raptured to Christ's presence. (Rev. 3:10; Luke 21:36; Matt. 24:39-42)
2. Therefore, we need to be watchful at all times, beseeching that we would prevail to escape the time of the great tribulation and stand before Christ. (Luke 21:36)