

## What Must Be Our Attitude Toward The Signs Of The Last Day.

Text: Luke 21:25-36

1) We should observe the signs

Suggested Hymns:

2) We should heed their warning

11, 17, 2, 283, 508

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 21:25-36, <sup>25</sup> *“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>26</sup> “men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.*

<sup>27</sup> *“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”*

<sup>29</sup> *Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> “When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. <sup>31</sup> “So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.*

<sup>32</sup> *“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. <sup>33</sup> “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. <sup>34</sup> “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. <sup>35</sup> “For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Will this world last forever, or will the time come when the present order will be destroyed?

There are scientists who say that their study of the forces of nature leads them to think that the present universe will not last forever, and that by and by there will be a terrific crash, due to the releasing of gigantic forces of nature, and that the world will be destroyed.

The religions of some of the ancient nations taught that the present universe would not be eternal. There were representatives of Greek and Roman religious thought who predicted a universal conflagration, which would prove utterly destructive to the order of things under which we are living now.

However, the authoritative answer to the question under consideration is given to us in God's Word. The text before us says, <sup>33</sup> ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”*** That settles the question for us. Our text makes it plain that there is coming an awful convulsion of nature, a catastrophe without parallel, and that it will mean the passing away of the visible universe, of heaven and earth.

We cannot afford to be indifferent in respect to this matter. When the crash does come, we know it will not mean annihilation for us, but our appearing before the judgment-seat of the great God and our entering, of body and soul, either upon heavenly joy or into a world of eternal woe.

In our text the one phase of the subject that is given prominence is that which refers to the signs that are to precede the coming of the Last Day. We are told that there will be such signs, and they are pointed out to us. Let consider the question, *what must be our attitude toward the signs of the last day mentioned in our text?* May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. We Should Observe The Signs.**

It is one of the acts of mercy of our heavenly Father to ordain that certain signs are to announce the coming of the Last Day. If He had not told us of such signs, could we have found any fault with Him? Certainly not! But He had compassion on us and decided to send us warnings, signs to indicate that the final catastrophe is impending.

Certainly the least for us to do is to be looking for, and to observe, those signs. It is this attitude which is described in the words of Jesus, ***“Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup>“When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. <sup>31</sup>“So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.*** In other words, our eyes are to be open, so that these signs will not remain unobserved when they occur.

Is it true that in discussing these signs we are really speaking of something sent by God? The signs mentioned in the text are to take place in nature. Our text says, <sup>25</sup> ***“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>26</sup> “men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.***

Can we, then, say that they come from God? The text does not mention this specifically. However, recall the account in the first chapter of the Bible telling of the creation of the universe, saying that the sun, moon, and stars shall be for signs. In the light of the narrative in Genesis chapter 1 we must not doubt that the signs spoken of are due to the arrangement given to the forces of the universe by the Creator.

Enemies of the revealed truth have said that these signs are nothing but natural phenomena, so who would be so credulous as to attach any significance to them? It is true that we have seen some of the things that are predicted here come to pass. For example - eclipses, falling, or shooting stars, comets, storms, earthquakes and tidal waves. In many cases their causes can be established, and their coming can frequently be determined in advance. But does that prove that they are not signs? Not at all!

What does it mean that something is a sign of the Last Day? Simply this, that God has given it this significance, that whenever it occurs, it should flash forth to us the warning: Judgment Day is approaching.

We know that an eclipse of the moon is due to the fact that the earth holds a position directly between the sun and the moon and intercepts the light of the former; but, being Christians, we likewise know that our heavenly Father has

arranged the universe that these eclipses will come about and teach us the important lesson that the world will not last forever.

This matter is beautifully illustrated by the sign that God gave to Noah and His descendants, namely, the rainbow, to assure them that He would not send another universal flood. The rainbow is a natural phenomenon and can easily be explained, but still it is a sign given by God and invested with a special significance.

Some people hold that the signs of the coming of the Last Day will be something so extraordinary and sensational that everybody will be able to see that the end is approaching. They are not willing to believe that our Lord is referring to occurrences that have taken place and that will continue to take place. Is that view correct in the light of our text? It is not.

There is nothing here that says that these occurrences in nature never happened before. The Lord says, on the one hand, that there will be signs and that the people will be distressed and perplexed. On the other hand, He says that the Last Day will come as a snare upon the people living on earth, that it will surprise them.

Clearly, then, the signs announcing Christ's coming will not be of such an extraordinary, or such a remarkable nature, that everybody will at once see their significance. Let us here think of the request of the Jews to be given a sign that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus had been giving them signs day after day, healing the sick, preaching the Gospel, etc. But these did not satisfy them, and they asked for a sign from heaven; but Jesus told them that no sign would be given to them but the sign of the prophet Jonah.

The ancients had an allegory of a man who had made a contract with death that the latter was not to appear until he had sent three messengers. The man felt quite secure and gave no thought to his death.

One day he fell ill; the doctor had to be called and pronounced his condition serious. His wife told him that his looks were alarming to her. Asking for a mirror, he himself confirmed the judgment of his wife.

Still he did not feel any anxiety because he thought that death would have to send his three messengers before he could approach him. All of a sudden the

dreaded visitor entered. When the man objected, death pointed to his three messengers: the doctor, the wife, and the man himself.

He had been given the promised warnings, but had not taken note of them and not recognised them as such. Let us not make the mistake of overlooking the signs of the Last Day which God places about us in such abundance.

## **2. We Should Heed Their Warning.**

We must, however, not merely observe the signs; we must heed the warning they bring to us. Just as there is a vast difference between learning the Word of God and following its sacred precepts, so a great difference exists between observing the signs of the Last Day and doing what they would tell us to do.

With respect to this matter we can divide mankind into three classes. Firstly, those who do not even observe, but seeing, do not see, and hearing, do not hear. Secondly, those who are observing, but without any good results. And thirdly, those who observe and follow up the observation with the proper preparation.

The three classes come before our minds here. The Lord says, <sup>34</sup> ***“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.*** These words describe well the unobserving, blind multitude.

Of the second class we are reminded in the words: <sup>31</sup> ***“So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.*** This class of people consists of those people who know but stop there. Knowledge, information, is indispensable, but it alone will not suffice.

And, finally, Jesus says to His disciples: <sup>36</sup> ***“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*** Here to the knowing is added the watching, and the praying. These words describe the people of the third class.

When Noah was building the ark, there must have been these three sorts of people: those who saw him build, but made no inquiries as to what he was doing; those who saw and inquired, but continued to remain in their wickedness; and those who inquired and went into the ark with Noah — the members of his family.

May God grant that we do not belong to the first class, described here, <sup>34</sup>  
***“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.***

May God grant that we do not belong to the second class, which knows, but does not profit by its knowledge! Let us anxiously strive to be watching and praying. Can we deny that the signs mentioned in the text have happened very often and that hence the pointer on the clock is not far from twelve, that midnight may be here very soon, and that, before we leave this building, the Son of Man may come in the clouds of heaven?

Watch and pray. Watch that you may be prepared when the Lord comes. Pray. This points to the character of the preparation. You must pray for it. It has to come from above; you cannot accomplish it yourself. We are sinners, we have to be cleansed of the sins clinging to us before we can face the great Judge.

There is a cleansing water prepared for man, the blood of Immanuel, and we must pray that it be applied to us. It is a blood which, although shed for all, benefits the believers only. Pray that God may keep you as a believer amid all the distractions, the dangers, the indifference, the unbelief, and the enmity against God and Christ, the many manifestations of sin and wickedness in these last days.

Watch and pray, not sporadically, but always, not merely in church, but in your homes and at work. Then you will not merely be observing the signs of the approach of the Last Day, but you will be heeding their lesson in the proper way, and when the evil catastrophe does set in and the whole world comes to its end, you will joyfully lift up your head, for your redemption draws near.

Let us pray that that day may come soon, as we conclude with the words of Revelation 22:20, <sup>20</sup> ***“He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Amen.***

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.