

Jesus Will Come Back

Sermon September 25, 2022

One day, Jesus was sitting across from the temple of Jerusalem, and He was talking about His second return. The disciples asked Him: *“When will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?”* (Matthew 24:3) Jesus said that there will be significant signs which will announce His return.

If we are looking to the sky, we can predict or guess about tomorrow's weather. By listening to the right information Jesus gave us, using our eyes and brains, we can guess about how close we are to the return of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that, when you see certain things begin to happen, *“Look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near,”* and *“when you see them happen the kingdom of God is near.”* (Luke 21:28, 31) Jesus and Paul both taught that the proper way to wait for His return is to be watchful, ready and sober.

The apostle John wrote that, when Jesus appears, we who believe in Him shall become like Him. (1 John 3:2-3) In 1 Thessalonians 4:18, Christians are commanded to encourage each other with words about the return of Christ. Hebrews 10:24-25 also says that as we should regularly meet to encourage one another, especially as we see the day of Jesus' return approaching.

Although we cannot find out the day when the Lord Jesus will return, it is wise to know what to watch for. I am inviting you to consider with me the next few signs. The first six are already happening. The last two are in preparatory stages.

Signs That Are Already Happening

1. People of Israel Return to Their Land

In 70-After Christ, Israel as a country was totally destroyed, and the people of Israel were spread all around the world. The prophets, including our Lord Jesus Christ, declared that before Christ would return, the people of Israel will return to their homeland and they will create a powerful country of Israel.

Let's hear the prophecies first:

“Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that ... I will bring again captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; ... they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, says the LORD thy God.” (Amos 9:13-15)

"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.'" (Ezekiel 37:21,22)

During the last 130 years, Jews from 108 nations have migrated to the land of Israel. During World War II, it became clear to the Jews that they needed a homeland. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was restored, when its independence was formally declared. Today, Israel's population is over 7 million. In 2023, Israel will celebrate its 75th anniversary, but some of its neighbours hate it and want to "wipe it off the map". The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was clearly a major turning point in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

2. Wars and Rumours of Wars

"And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." (Matthew 24:6-7a)

At this point I would like to highlight the words "YOU WILL HEAR".

During human history, there were innumerable wars between tribes, countries, and different nations. The rumours about the wars were passing through months or years, since the radio was invented only in 20th century. The telegraph, the radio and the TV were able to share the news in a larger way and very quickly.

Since World War II, many countries have been building up massive arsenals of weapons. The potential for a nuclear world war grows day by day. Entering the 21st century, we hear of frequent wars, such as the war in Afghanistan, the war in Iraq, the wars between Israel and its surrounding countries, and the war in Syria.

Now the whole world is stressed about the war between Russia and Ukraine, which is getting more and more intense. Europe is concerned about the coming winter, since a huge part of Europe will not get gas from Russia to heat their homes, and this can lead to a disaster or more severe conflicts.

The biggest nuclear reactor in Ukraine is attacked almost daily. An explosion would harm a huge part of Europe and would bring in disaster to our whole world. My own feeling is that Russia will never give up and will never walk away as a loser. This whole situation makes me to tremble.

However God knows about all this horrifying situation, and allows our main leaders to make one mistake after another. And, if God wants to use the leaders' mistakes to a World War III, which will destroy the whole of humanity and our globe, then everything will happen was predicted by Jesus Christ. This war would

be a Man-Made disaster, and could bring us to “End Time”, as politicians say these days.

3. Famines, Pestilence, Earthquakes

“And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matthew 24:7b-8) Indeed, the Bible indicates that great natural disasters, famines, and other types of disruptions will occur in the very last days.

Due to flooding and droughts, world food supplies are running very low. People are expecting a global food shortage and famines in many places. In 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a warning that infectious diseases are emerging more quickly and spreading faster around the globe than ever before, and they are becoming increasingly difficult to treat. These days, more pandemic outbreaks can easily threaten billions of people due to large numbers of modern day air travellers. The COVID-19 pandemic has spread rapidly since 2019, invading most countries in the world.

Scientific data does show that we have been seeing a large increase in earthquakes. We all remember the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 and the earthquakes in China in 2008, in Haiti in 2010, in Nepal in 2015, in Indonesia in 2018, in the Caribbean in 2020, and so on. Are these not the beginning of disasters? According to a number of scientists, another star or large planet is affecting the sun's magnetic field, which is also affecting the earth's magnetic field. The North Pole is shifting, so we should see a continual increase in earthquakes and volcanic activity in coming years.

From these facts, we can be certain that the Lord Jesus' prophecy has been fulfilled.

How should we live while we wait?

How should we behave these days as we see that the day of our Lord's return is coming so close?

We should find comfort in Psalm 91:

¹ *Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

² *I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”*

³ *Surely God will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.*

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

⁹ If you say, "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling,

¹⁰ no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

As we will conclude, the Lord's return is right at the door and could occur at any time. Let us prepare ourselves by watching and praying and doing what is pleasing God. Amen