

THE SON OF MAN COMING

Luke 21:1-38

Key Verse: 21:27

"At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Today Jesus tells his disciples about a widow's offering, and about the signs of the end of the age. One night, when a noble father saw his only son committing a sin of immorality, the father felt terrible and yelled at his dog, "Terrible! Is this not the end of the age?!" The signs of the end of the age are characteristically violence, anguish and distress, amorality, perversion and deception. Among them, deception or lies may be the worst phenomenon. Do you know what is the main point of this passage? It is about the glorious Son of Man coming.

First, a widow's offering (1-4).

Jesus knew that his disciples were greatly tempted when they saw the rich put their big bundles of money into the temple treasury in the sight of many people. In order to teach his disciples, Jesus told a story about a poor widow. He said, "This poor widow has put in more than all the others" (3). Jesus really wanted his disciples to know that a sacrificial heart is more important than money. The widow's offering reminds us of Deuteronomy 6:5. It says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." On the other hand, the rich people's offering reminds us of Luke 18:11b,12. It says, "God, I thank you that I am not like other

men...I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." The rich were like the swaggering Pharisees in the temple. Here Jesus teaches his disciples that they must see the things of the world with a spiritual value system.

Second, the signs of the end of the age (5-19).

Materialistic temptation is one of the signs of the end of the age. Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones covered with plates of gold of great weight (5). Soon, covetous desires came into their hearts. When they became shaky because of their covetous desires, they felt deeply ashamed of their dusty clothes compared with the pompous robes of the priests and the interior decoration of the temple buildings. Still, the disciples were susceptible to the glittering things of the world. The influence of materialism took away truth, and what they had learned from Jesus evaporated from their hearts too soon. To Jesus, they were the future leaders who should influence the world to such a degree that the trend of world history would be changed, and human culture and civilization set on right foundations. Therefore, whoever wants to be the disciple of Jesus must overcome material temptation first.

Jesus understood his disciples' surprise, because the temple was the aggregation of cultural achievements of the time. Jesus also understood their materialistic temptation. So he told them, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down" (6). Jesus said this to help them have a prophetic insight to see human culture. Jesus told them

this to teach that the glittering things of the world are temporal, and in a matter of time, they will perish like German cheese.

But the disciples did not get the point; instead, they were surprised at his words and asked, "Teacher, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?" (7) Jesus did not answer them directly. But he warned them, "Watch out that you are not deceived" (8a). Materialism always hatches one deception upon another.

The rise of magic artists is another sign of the end of the age. Look at verse 8b. "For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them." They are the magic artists. They are people like Spinoza (1632-1677). They have the ability to grasp the ominous future situation of the world. Then they begin to plant fear until people see them as messiahs. The magic artists see that some are educated. Then they feed their pride little by little, until they become extremely self-righteous; they make them believe the urgency of the Second Coming of Jesus to them selves only. Those who become self-righteous give all their money to magic artists as if they were rich. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." From the beginning, Jesus taught people to repent of their sins and accept the kingdom of God (Mk 1:15). But false messiahs deceive people until they would believe their false prediction. For example, in 1992, they predicted that Jesus would come on October 28, 9:00 p.m. But Jesus did not come again on that day. So people only lost their property to be ready for the coming of Jesus.

Pleasure-seeking seems to be one of the signs of the end of the age. People work hard, but they do not get much reward. They come to a conclusion in their secret hearts, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1Co 15:32b). So they want to enjoy and relax even for a while. Many want to go crazy even for a little while. Many want to enjoy suspense and thrills. This kind of lifestyle results in becoming like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They are generally honking too loud and drink in despair. 2 Timothy 3:4 says these kinds of people are "treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

At the end of the age, people are fearful. Look at verse 9. "When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." Most people are fearful because of all kinds of rumors of war and accidental explosions of nuclear missiles. In order to overcome fear, many people use drugs and abuse themselves in abnormal behavior. People spend all their hard-earned money to quell their fears even for a moment. But people are all the more fearful because they are under the rule of Satan (Heb 2:15).

The most distinctive sign of the end of the age is the rise of God-haters. Look at verse 12. "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name." The immediate cause of persecution of Christians was the apostasy of Judaism and Christian

resistance to the Roman Emperor worship. But the direct cause of the persecution of Christians was Jesus' name. Let's read verse 12. "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name." Again, let's read verse 17. "All men will hate you because of me." In the last days, the world is full of God-haters. They hate the children of God. They falsely heap accusations on them. They look down on the children of God simply because the children of God are humble and they do not get even. God-haters are silent at messy and loud rock music in crowded apartment buildings. But they are intolerant of hymn singing in apartment buildings or college campuses. One father didn't care about his daughter when she was wayward, even though she brought a boy to her home and slept. But since his daughter became a child of God and lives a decent life, he began to persecute her, wasting much money. In reality, they do not hate their children. They hate God, because of their guilty consciences. They hate God in proportion to their wickedness. We, the children of God, are happy to be persecuted for his name's sake (17). Matthew 5:10 says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Third, the Jerusalem temple was desecrated and destroyed (20-24).

We, the children of God, must see the world from God's point of view. According to legend, they say that in 168 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes demolished Jerusalem temple and built a pagan temple, and in the center of the pagan temple he placed the head of a pig as the

symbol of sacrifice and worship. Again in 70 A.D., Titus demolished Jerusalem as was prophesied (Mk 13:2). As a result, not one stone was left on another in the Jerusalem temple. At that time, the meaning of this event was only terrifying to the people, who thought that the Jerusalem temple is the house of God, and Jerusalem, the holy city. However, in view of God's history, the fall of Jerusalem was a powerful factor in the deliverance of the church of Christ from the grip of Judaism. For example, Israel rejected God and abandoned the privilege of being a priestly nation. Then God chose the early Christians as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Soon, God sent them to conquer the Roman Empire. Virtually, the Roman Empire crumbled before being conquered on account of their chaotic moral corruption. The early Christians conquered Rome. Then God sent Christians to England, finally to America. God's purpose for establishing a kingdom of priests and a holy nation came across the Atlantic Ocean and arrived in America. Despite the amoral situation, God has hope for America as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Here, all we have to do is live by the law of God. We also must not allow elementary school children to indulge in sin. Instead, we must teach them the law of God very strictly. Then God will use us as a blessing to all people of all nations.

Look at verses 20-24. As was prophesied, after the destruction of Jerusalem, many people of Israel were dragged into captivity in foreign lands. It was to punish them because they did not maintain God's blessing. There is no human pleasure of any kind when God's hand is raised. For example, to a woman, pregnancy is a time of joy, and a nursing mother is a symbol of human happiness. But at a time of calamity, all these human pleasures such as pregnancy, and nursing a

child, and accumulation of material things turn out to be burdens.

Fourth, they will see the Son of Man coming (25-38).

At the time of trial, we must look up at God. Look at verse 27. "At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." When we look up at God in the time of trial, we learn that the Son of Man is coming. The Son of Man's coming is the day of great victory and most importantly, it is the day we see Jesus coming in a cloud with power and great glory. On the contrary, to God-haters, the last days will be a time of great punishment. Because of God-haters, even the nations and nature, all the elements of the world, such as the sun, moon and all the stars, will dissolve. When the sea, which is the center of earthly gravity, will be greatly troubled, roaring and tossing, nations will be in anguish and perplexity (25). Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, because they have no excuse for their sins (26). To the children of God, the Son of Man's coming again is the most glorious day. To the children of God, it is the day we can stand up and lift up our heads like triumphant generals (28). In the past, the children of God were not praised or honored for their sacrificial lives of faith. But when the Son of Man comes again, they can stand up and lift up their heads to welcome the glorious coming of Jesus. This will surely happen, whether they believe it or not. Look at verse 33. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

The day of the Lord is the day of punishment for those who have lived selfish lives as God-haters. But for those who have lived for the

sake of his name, it is the day of glorious victory. Ungodly men deliberately rejected the Son of Man. They crucified Jesus on a cross, simply because he is the Son of God. They threw him outside the city wall of Jerusalem. They hoped they would never see him again. But verse 27a says, "At that time they will see the Son of Man...." They will see him with their own eyes, coming in a cloud with power and great glory. They must stand before him to be judged one by one (2 Cor 5:10). After judgment, they go to the place of eternal condemnation (Rev 21:8). On the other hand, this is the day of salvation and honor and final victory for those who have sacrificed and cried many tears for the sake of his name. Read verse 27 again. "At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." This is the day we see Jesus face to face with great joy.

How do we know this? Look at verses 29-31. "He told them this parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.'" Generally, people can figure out the weather forecast. Likewise, we, the children of God, must have a prophetic insight to see the world from God's point of view, and to see that the future is glorious because Jesus comes again in power and glory. Still, there are many things for the children of God to watch out for. So in verses 34-36 Jesus warns us to be careful. "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about

to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

There are many signs of the end of the age. But we children of God must believe God's word of promises and live a different life, looking forward to seeing the Son of Man coming in great glory.