

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
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**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 33
THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

INTRODUCTION

The Return of the LORD Jesus Christ is a very momentous event. It is the climax of the great and glorious work of salvation that every Christian looks forward to as his hope.

But before that Day comes there are signs given by God so that the Christian will be vigilant and watchful, for the Day of the Lord must not catch God's people unawares. They are to be children of light and are therefore able to recognize the signs of the times.

These prophetic signs are not for the unbelievers. They are blind to spiritual things and will not understand them at all. We are not talking of cognitive knowledge but experiential knowledge. Prophecies are for the children of God and must be viewed simply as our Heavenly Father revealing to His children that "these are some of the things that you Heavenly Father will surely do in the future." Do you believe that He is omnipresent? Do you also believe that He is omnipotent and omniscient? If you do, then what He has

prophesied will definitely be fulfilled in the future.

Our belief must not be merely giving God lip service. Saying that we believe that Jesus Christ will return means little in the eyes of God if our present lives are not lived in light of God's revealed truth. An example of this is the account of Joseph in Genesis 41. Joseph was given the ability to interpret the two dreams of Pharaoh. After he did so, he explained to Pharaoh what he must do in order to survive during the seven year of very great famine. Concrete steps were taken by Pharaoh on the advice of Joseph to build barns all over the major cities in Egypt and taxed the people during the first seven years of great plenty in order to fill up the barns. By these steps not only did Egypt survive, but Egypt and Joseph were used by the LORD to bring Israel and his family of seventy-five into Egypt. Israel stayed for 430 years. At the end of this period, Israel became a people numbering more than 2,000,000.

Our sovereign God knows the end from the beginning. He not only knows the future He controls the future absolutely. These signs that we are about to study must impact our present lives or else we would be considered as hearers only.

OUTLINE

Signs of Christ's Coming

1. The Gospel Preached to the world and the Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24:14-15)
2. There Shall Be Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:16-22)
3. False Christs and False Prophets will arise (Matthew 24:23-28)
4. The Appearance of the Sign of Man (Matthew 24:19-35)

COMMENTARY

The Gospel Preached to the World and the Abomination of Desolation

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD: One of the first signs before the second coming of Christ will be the global proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ for a witness to all the nations. Modern information technology in mass communication has already made this a reality in our time. There will be those who hear and believe and are sealed by the Holy Spirit. There will be those who will reject the gospel of salvation, and it will be an additional witness against them on that great Day of Judgment. They will be without excuse. By that time, the opportunity to believe will be over, and "then the end shall come" (Matthew 24:14).

Note that the Bible did not say that the world will be saved or converted but that the gospel will be preached in all the world. The gospel reaches all the

four corners of the world, even into the underground churches of China.

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION: Jesus mentioned that there is a day when the readers of Scriptures will witness "THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION stand in the holy place" which the prophet Daniel spoke of in his book (Matthew 24:25). Once again, we have Jesus' testimony that Daniel wrote the book that bears his name against some critics who doubt his authorship. The word "abomination" denotes an object that is abhorrent and detestable. In Scripture it is used primarily to denote things associated with idolatry and gross ungodliness. In the book of Revelation it is equated with immoralities and spiritual uncleanness of the false religious system known as Babylon the great, the mother of harlots (Revelation 17:5).¹ The prophet Daniel referred to the abomination of desolation three times (9:27; 11:31; 12:11).²

¹ Revelation 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

² Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of **abominations he shall make it desolate**, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon **the desolate**.

Daniel 11:31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place **the abomination that maketh desolate**.

Daniel 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and **the abomination that maketh desolate** set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

This is the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel (Daniel 9:27). This reference of Christ to Daniel's abomination of desolation was not the abomination that Antiochus Epiphanes placed in the Temple during the inter-testamental period. If this was so then the LORD would have used the past tense. As it is He deliberately used the future tense in the phrase "and ye shall see". This future event of an abomination of desolation will take place at the mid-point of the Seven years of Great Tribulation. The Antichrist had by then made a peace treaty with Israel, God's people. He will break it by placing a huge statute of himself in the Temple.³

This implies that the Temple would have to be rebuilt in order for the abomination of desolation to be placed in it. It is reported in many documentaries that some orthodox Jews who believe that they are called to rebuild the Temple of Solomon had already completed all the items necessary for the worship once the Temple is rebuilt. These items would include the ark with the mercy seat, the lampstand, the table of shewbread, and the altar of incense, not forgetting the laver and the altar where the sacrifice would be offered.

There Shall Be Great Tribulation

Jesus had just described a time of troubles and tribulations that will happen in the world prior to His return. But the world does not believe Him. The fact is that these things have been

happening since the history of men. It is nothing new. Human society has been hoping for a better future of peace, progress, and prosperity. They will try to achieve that. The leaders of the world will try to bring about better times and conditions in the world. Despite the temporary times of improvement, things are destined to become worse before the return of Christ. Jesus has predicted it. Things will only be permanently better when Christ returns.

Daniel had predicted (9:24): *"Seventy weeks are determined (decreed) upon thy people (Israel) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make and end of sins, and to make reconciliation (atonement) for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (or holy place)."*

"Seventy weeks" is literally "seventy sevens" **referring to years, that means 490 years** (Daniel 9:2). That means that 490 years would pass before the Messiah would return and establish His eternal kingdom of righteousness. Then Daniel explained that the commencement of the 490 years would begin at the "going forth of **the commandment (a decree)** to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince. This decree was **issued by King Artaxerxes in 445 B.C.** (Nehemiah 2:5-6).

Daniel also explained that at the end of the **"seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks,"** that is, 69

³ See also Revelation 13.

weeks of years, viz, 483 years, “*the Messiah be cut off and not for himself, and **the people** of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*” (Daniel 9:26).⁴ It has been calculated **that exactly 483 years** had passed from the decree of Artaxerxes until Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and subsequently the wicked people “cut off” Jesus Christ, and the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70!

Now there is one more week of years left (69 weeks of years have passed), **the seventieth week**. In this last week, **the prince** “*confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of **the abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate**” (Daniel 9:27-emphasis added).⁵ This prince is identified as the Antichrist who will emerge in the last days and with whom Israel will make covenant thinking that he will be her great saviour. But after three and a half years the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, and will turn violently and aggressively against Israel, and set himself as God, and*

commit the “**abomination of desolation**” that will signal the beginning of the Great Tribulation, which brings about terrible persecution of Jews and also Christians.⁶

The exhortation “whoso readeth, let him understand” underscores the fact that Jesus was not giving the warning to His disciples themselves or to their generation but to those Christians in the end time. They will read Scripture and these truths will enable them to understand their trials and give them strength to endure until the end.

Jesus continued to describe more perils that would occur before His second coming. In this part of His discourse, He tells all believers living in the land of Israel what they should do during the Tribulation. For the Jews and Christians in Israel, He tells them to flee to the mountains. So severe are the persecutions of the Jews that God will protect and save one third of the number of Jews according to the prophet Zechariah (13:8-9).⁷ The previous massacre of the Jews by the Romans in A.D. 70, and the holocausts by Hitler during World War II (1939-45) will be nothing compared to this end-time butchery. Many Christians too will be

⁴ Note that the Jewish calculation is based on a 360 days per year rather than the present 365 days per year. The year of Christ’s crucifixion would be calculated to be about 33 A.D.

⁵ In order to cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease there must be a re-building of the Temple, and a resumption of the burnt offerings and sacrifices –Walvoord.

⁶ Read this portion of Daniel in conjunction with Revelation chapters 12 & 13.

⁷ Zechariah 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

slaughtered (Revelation 7:9, 13-14).⁸ Jesus stressed the urgency of that time. There is no time at all when one is in the house, not even the retrieving of one's clothes. The only option for Jews and Christians then is to run away. The time of witnessing is over. It will be terrible for those who are pregnant and those who nurse infants. The Lord calls on His people to pray that all these terrible happenings will not happen in winter which might be a hindrance to their flight. It will be a time of **great tribulation**. There is nothing in the history of man that could be compared to it. If not for the intervention of God to shorten those terrible days, no one would be spared. But God will shorten the time for His people's sake.

False Christs and False Prophets will arise

False teachers and prophets will arise and are able to perform great signs and wonders. These signs and wonders would be so awesome and convincing that they could deceive, if it were possible (which is not), even the elect. These are Satan's agents. Satan will empower them to make a last attempt to deceive those who flee from the

⁸ Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; . . .13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Antichrist. Jesus stresses that He has warned His people. Jesus tells them not to be deceived. His second coming to earth will be sudden, quick, and visible to all. Jesus states a proverb by them, "wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together" (Matthew 24:28). Jesus means that the world would be so morally corrupt and spiritually decayed that it is liken unto a dead animal in wilderness. Christ will appear to make final removal of the carcass through His righteous and terrible judgment.

Which movement calls herself "Signs and Wonders Movement" today? Is it not the Charismatic Movement? They interpret this verse as teaching the false movement that is in their movement which they claim to be true. What we are seeing today is the confusion of the end times. What is before fulfilled in our life time is now "smoke-screened" by the millions of professing Charismatic Christians with their niceties and friendliness and not a few have fallen into their trap. We dare not even criticize them for what they truly are, the end time deception of the last days, because of their great influence and impact into Christendom.

The Sign of the Son of Man

Jesus' Second Coming is mentioned earlier in 24:27 where the Bible says that it will be a global and open event and not a private and hidden one. Here we are told in greater detail as to what will happen to the universe before the actual return of Christ.

Jesus now describes His visible glorious return to earth. Immediately after the great tribulation of those days, *“the sun will be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken”* (Matthew 24:29). Jesus is describing what will happen to the heavenly bodies and the universe when He appears in glory. It will be so awesome and terrifying that the inhabitants of earth will “mourn” (faint and grieve, and be terrified) as they see the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they reject, and persecuted His people, coming down in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory — totally victorious, glorious, and all-powerful! This was also mentioned by the apostle Peter as the closure of the last days in Acts 2:19-20, *“And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.”*

The unrepentant and ungodly will be judged and destroyed. Then Jesus will send His angels with a great trumpet sound to gather all His elect from the four corners of the earth. Many who are still fearful will be still hiding. They will be gathered together. The gathered ones will include all the surviving Jews (it will include at least the 144,000 Jews of Rev 7) and Christians who came to know the Lord during the time of the Great Tribulation. The Lord Jesus Christ

will lead them into the glory of His kingdom and they will reign with Him for a thousand years! This is the fulfilment of the parables of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24), the separation of the good and bad fish (Matt. 13:47) and the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:32).

Jesus then spoke a parable to His hearers. Obviously He wanted them to understand better what He had spoken to them. He told them a parable of the fig tree. Fig trees are so common in Israel. They are almost grown everywhere. Jesus told them to “learn” — to truly understand and accept its teaching. He told them that when a fig tree begins to have tender branches and the leaves start to grow, summertime is near. All those who live in temperate countries know that this is also true of many other kinds of trees. Jesus then explained that when they should see “all these things” they should know “it is near, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:33). In the context of “all these things,” Jesus was undoubtedly referring to all the signs and wonders that He had described to His discourse. These things will indicate that His coming is near, indeed at the very door! Jesus further declared that *“this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”* The signs which He described in His discourse (Matthew 24-25) will be experienced by one generation, the generation living at the end time will see all those signs. They will comprise of Jews and Gentiles who are alive at the Rapture but are not taken up because they do not know the Lord Jesus Christ

among that generation, however, there will be many who will later come to salvation during the tribulation.

Jesus punctuated His sermon here with the words: *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away”* (Matthew 24:35). One day even this heaven and earth will pass away: *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens** shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, **the earth** also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”* (2 Peter 3:10). *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the **first heaven and the first earth** were passed away; and there was no more sea”* (Revelation 21:1).

But Jesus said that what He had just declared will not pass away. Every letter of Jesus’ words will be fulfilled, including what He said about the things that will happen in the end time before His return. *If any man have an ear, let him hear* (Revelation 13:9).

PRACTICAL VALUE

Every Christian should love to read the Olivet Discourse repeatedly and never find it dull or wasteful for doing so. Our Lord who is our Heavenly Father, unveils the future for us to warn us of the social and spiritual corruption that will characterize the end-time age. These words have been spoken, and do we not behold and believe the truth of what our Lord Jesus has predicted?

Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed as Jesus had foretold, less than forty years after His ascension.

But the worst is yet to come, and it will come. How should we as children of the Light live in these last days before His return? Should we not love and care for one another in advancing the kingdom of God? Should we not encourage and build one another up in our Christian living? Should we not spend our substance and our time and energy for the gospel sake? Let us give to the Lord what we cannot keep for what we can keep for all eternity? May God help us to be wise and live in the light of God’s Holy and perfect Word.

In the view of the social and spiritual downward slide in society, we ought to brace ourselves that we are not being dragged into it. It requires us much God-given moral and spiritual courage and tenacity to stand up against the tidal waves of unbelief and ungodliness. Let us not live to ourselves but unto the Lord for His glory. Many around us will be swept away and many will be lost for ever. It is very sad. But it is something that will happen because the world reject Jesus Christ, their Lord and Saviour. Beside Him there is none other. Satan steps in and he desires nothing but to rob, deceive, destroy, and kill those who turn their backs to God.

Let us learn this first part of the Olivet Discourse well. The next lesson will focus on the second part, when our Lord Jesus Christ will teach us more

precious truths and lessons. The Lord
be praised. AMEN

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: John 12:37-50

TUESDAY: John 12:37-50

WEDNESDAY: John 12:37-50

THURSDAY: Matthew 24:1-13; Mark 13:1-13; Luke 21:5-19

FRIDAY: Matthew 24:1-13; Mark 13:1-13; Luke 21:5-19

Discussion Questions

1. Do the use of miracles save souls from their sin and turn them to the Saviour? Give reasons for your answer.

2. Do secret Christians still exist today? Are you a secret Christian? Why do Christians want to be a secret Christian?

3. "If you do not believe in Jesus Christ you will go to Hell?" Is this a right and biblical way to tell someone about Jesus Christ?

4. What is the difference between deception and lying? Are there many deceivers in Christendom today?

5. Explain the phrase, “the love of many shall wax cold” in Matthew 24:12? Do you see this phenomenon in our church and in your own life?
