

"THE PRESENCE OF THE SON OF MAN"

--[MATTHEW 24:32-44](#)---NOVEMBER 13---

"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."--[Matthew 26:41](#).

FOR various reasons many Bible students understand that our Lord referred to the Jewish nation under the symbolism of a fig-tree. He had been telling his disciples what he expected in the end of this age, when he would come again to receive his faithful to himself and to give them a place as his Bride upon his Throne and to establish his Kingdom under the whole heavens for the blessing of Israel and all the world through Israel. In this study he tells us that amongst the prominent signs of the closing of this age and the opening of the new will be the budding of the fig tree--the springing forth of new life and new hope in the Jewish nation. And is not this condition of things manifesting itself today? Behold the Jews awakening and listening to the voice of Moses and the Prophets calling them to Palestine and to fresh hope in God and in the glorious promises to which they still are heirs as the natural [R4706 : page 347] seed of Abraham! "For the gifts and calling of God are things he does not repent of."--[Rom. 11:11-39](#).

"THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS"

The generation which witnesses the signs promised in the verses preceding our lesson and which witnesses this putting forth of the green leaves of hope by Israel will see to the full the accomplishment of the glorious change of Dispensation so long foretold. They will witness the passing of the reign of the Prince of Darkness and the inauguration of the glorious reign of the Prince of Light --Messiah with his glorious Bride class; not, however, that mankind will see Messiah with the natural eye, nor see even his glorious Bride, except with the eyes of their understanding. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" in this highest sense. Flesh and blood, however, will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets in the Kingdom, and will have full testimony and practical demonstration of the Kingdom power in the great transformation that will be wrought and the restitution blessings which will be showered upon Israel and upon all who will come into harmony with God through Israel's New Covenant.--[Jer. 31:31](#).

The present ecclesiastical heavens and the present social earth will, indeed, both pass away in the great time of trouble with which this age will end; but following these, supplanting them, will come the new heavens and the new earth--the new religious institutions of the Lord --the Church in glory, and the new social order amongst mankind under the regulations for which we still pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth." Then the words of the great Teacher will surely have fulfillment.

THE DAY AND HOUR HAD NOT BEEN FORETOLD

The day and hour of the great change no one knew, not even the angels in heaven. The Master himself declared that he did not know--but the Father alone. This should not, however, be understood to mean that the Son of God would not know about the matter later on, in due time, before he would begin his work of establishing the Kingdom. Neither would it prove that the angels of heaven would be in ignorance up to the last moment. Neither would it prove that God's people, living at the time for the establishment of the Kingdom, would not know. In fact, the Master declares that all living in proper harmony with him would be kept informed respecting the Father's Plans as they became due. He declared that if they would partake of the things of God and follow after them, then they should have meat in due season.

In this very study the Great Teacher illustrates this principle, referring to Noah and Lot. Noah was informed respecting the coming change of Dispensation when he was instructed to build the ark one hundred and twenty years before the flood. Lot was instructed respecting the disaster coming upon the city in which he lived long enough in advance to escape from it; likewise the Church of Christ is forewarned by this illustration and reminded that when they flee they shall not, like Lot's wife, covetously look back to the things which, under Divine condemnation, are to pass away, but shall escape to the mountain--flee to the Kingdom of God, which will at that time be in process of establishment.

Doubtless much of the immorality and sensuality which marked the days of Noah and the days of Lot will prevail in the world in the closing days of the present age. Other Scriptures so inform us, even though this study intimates nothing of the kind. This lesson brings to our attention another feature connected with our Lord's Second Advent--a feature which hitherto has been little noticed by Bible students. It informs us that his Second Coming will be unobserved, unknown to the world; that he will be present in the world, and have to do with the gathering together of his saints and with the great time of trouble which will follow, yet be entirely invisible to men, recognizable only by outward signs of his presence and known only to the saintly few of humanity.

This feature of the lesson is veiled from the eyes of the average Bible student by a mistranslated word. The Greek for the word *coming* in **verses 37** and **39** is *parousia*, which *does not mean coming*, but should be rendered *presence*, as of one who has already come.

"IN THE PRESENCE OF THE SON OF MAN"

This gives us a stupendous thought! The great King of kings will for a time be present amongst men, invisible, unknown, except by a very few of his saints, to whom his presence will be revealed through the knock of prophecy and the opening of the eyes of their understanding to appreciate fulfillments. Everything will continue as ordinarily --the eating, drinking, planting, building and marrying, "as it was in the days of Noah." Had the world known in Noah's day the climax of trouble impending, many of the ordinary affairs of life would have been discontinued --and likewise here. The lesson is that as the world did not know in Noah's day, so the world will not know "in the days of the Son of Man"--in the presence of the Son of Man.

The field is the world, said our Lord, in explaining one of his parables. And so we should interpret it here. The Lord will gather some of his jewels from the field; all not his jewels will be left. Two will be grinding at the mill preparing food for the household; one will be taken and another left. The Lord's household is the Church, and the mills which prepare the food for the Church are theological. The intimation is that some theologians will be taken and some will be left, in the selective processes of the presence of the Son of Man--in the making up of his jewels.

St. Luke mentions another feature of this discourse. There shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other left. A bed is a place for rest. All churches profess to be resting places, where the weary and heavy-laden rest through faith in God and in his promises. The **[R4706 : page 348]** teaching, then, would be that not all who are resting in the churches of Christendom, in the creeds, will be amongst the elect, the gathered jewels. Some will be taken away from these beds. Others will be left in them. A vivid description of these creed-beds and their unsatisfactory character is given us by the Prophet.-- [Isaiah 28:20](#).

WATCH THAT YE MAY KNOW

Following these illustrations of his presence and his work in the harvest time of this Gospel Age the Master exhorts all of his followers to watch, to be ready, to be on the alert, to be on the lookout, that they may be ready for his presence, that they may, in due time, discern his presence, and that they may be gathered or separated from the world and theological relationship, and from earthly church relationship, to the Master

himself. Some very earnest Bible students believe that we are in this harvest period now; that the Son of Man, the glorified Messiah, invisible to men, is even now present doing a searching and separating work in his Church, gathering his saints unto himself preparatory to their change from earthly to heavenly conditions and preparatory to the inauguration of the great time of trouble, by which present institutions will be blotted out to make way for the Kingdom of righteousness, for which we have so long prayed. Many Bible students believe that the present unrest and sifting and shaking amongst Christians and the creeds of all denominations and the colleges and seminaries are but incidental to this work which the Son of Man, present amongst us, is accomplishing for the purpose of fully separating to himself his very elect. Whether this proposition be agreed to or not, the fact still remains that thus matters will be whenever the time shall come, whenever the end of this age and the inauguration of the new shall take place.

SATAN'S HOUSE TO BE BROKEN UP

All of the foregoing suggestions are confirmed by the symbolism of the *43d verse*. Here the Master likens the institutions of the present time to a house or household. Elsewhere he informs us that Satan is the Prince of this world, the over-lord who tyrannizes the world, operating through the weaknesses and passions and depraved appetites and impaired reasoning faculties of humanity. Had the time of the Lord's Second Advent been clearly made known that knowledge would have so altered matters and affairs that the world would not have been taken by surprise in connection with the gathering of the Lord's jewels and the establishment of his Kingdom, and thus there would not be such a breaking-up in earth's affairs as is now impending; the Kingdom would be established, but not in the way in which God designed.

In this verse our Lord likens his second presence, unknown to the world, to the presence of a thief in a house, unknown to its master. The Lord's saints in the world are his jewels. These he will take away and the loss to the world will be great. As the saintly ones will be gathered from the field, from the mill and from the bed into closer heart-union with the Lord, those left in the world, the mill and the bed, will be greatly disadvantaged--not because the jewel class are wealthy or have worldly greatness, for of these chosen saints it is distinctly stated that there are amongst them "not many great, not many rich, not many wise, not many noble." But these saintly ones are, nevertheless, the "salt" of the earth and the salt of the churches, and the salt of the theological seminaries. After the taking away of the salt class, putrefaction and disintegration will speedily follow.

In view of all this, all who profess to be the Lord's people should earnestly watch, as well as pray; they should watch their words and thoughts and doings and see to it that they worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and that they do not idolize either dead or living men or creeds. Thus walking circumspectly in the footsteps of Jesus the saintly ones will be kept in the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world to prove them.--[*Rev. 3:10*](#).

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