

My words will not pass away. (Luk 21:25-36)

* Almost 2,000 years have passed since Jesus predicted his return. Today we've heard the voice of Jesus directed to whom it may concern, *Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place*, (Lk.21:32). But critics whom these words may not concern, speak out sarcastically. They say, the nations come after nations within these two millenniums and where is the promise of his coming? *For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the creation of the universe*, (2Pe 3:4).

* As I read and watched the media, in addition to what I recently experienced, it helps me to conclude that our world and the US particularly is getting less Christian! But from the beginning it was not like that. In order to prove this remark I looked for an illustration. Aha! Here is one, dated 1854. It is a prescription for employees working in the great Wanaker store in New York City that was printed in *The Sunday School Times*. Here is a brief variant of that entry. It read: *Each employee must not pay less than \$5 per year to the church and must attend Sunday school every Sunday. ...Men employees are given an evening a week for courting purposes, and two if they go to prayer meeting regularly*. Friends, it is unbelievable how far we have run from the Christian society of the 19th century. For example, Christians today cannot witness about their faith in Christ Jesus to individuals in public; otherwise, they may be persecuted for violation of human rights. Ten years back only 25% of the population attended church on Easter, (according to a survey made in a Southern Bible Belt town). Meanwhile the unchurched population has grown; it increased from 24 to 34 percent, and in just one decade ten individuals from each hundred of church people stopped attending their churches, (State of the Church 2002, p.17). If this trend continues, then in 50 years there will be found not one person in the local church. The point is that this postmodern time is profoundly different from the world of our grandparents; it's getting less Christian and it's getting more secular. Therefore, today there are less people on our planet who are longing for the Second Advent, in spite of the fact that the population on our planet has almost doubled. On the other hand, there are more people who refuse Christian ethics and beliefs.

* Now I want you to recall The *Parable of the Ten Minas* that was said by Jesus in connection with the radical belief that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately or with the atheistic belief that it was not going happen at all. Jesus might have told this parable several hours before the Hebrew hallelujahs and Gentile hosannas were made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem when he was riding on a donkey. At that particular moment, the messianic expectations highly increased among Jesus' countrymen but the significance of the occurrence didn't match what people wanted. In order to avoid the radical ideas regarding the coming kingdom, Jesus told this parable. Once upon a time a nobleman left his country to get a kingdom and sometime later he got back home where he established his power over

his countrymen even though many didn't want him to be their king. Friends, you know this story and the main idea. Yes, it is about the glorious and triumphant homecoming of the King after inauguration. Upon his returning, he got rid of the rivals for power and placed in position of authority over cities the servants who had shown themselves trustworthy.

* The background of this story apparently had taken place many times in the past as it, for example, occurred with Herod the Great in 40 B.C. He made a journey to Rome where he was crowned King of Judea. The next episode occurred with Herod's son Archelaus. He also made a business trip to Rome to get Judea, Samaria, and Idumea while Jesus was a boy in Nazareth. I am pretty sure the history of the world, its past and future, has some more stories about this account. Some of them you knew, some you don't, but you know the very last one. This story had its beginning 2000 years ago, and it will have its end sometime in the future. We believe, the Son of Man, the Messiah, departed from this world for a while to receive a crown and dominion above this world. Now he is sitting at the right hand of his Father Almighty. From thence he will come back to execute the authority given him over the living and the dead. Today we've read the words of the King Jesus being addressed to whom it may concern. We read, *Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.* (Luk 21:32,33).

* Seriously, Jesus will return. Amen. Any humanistic arguments or scientific discoveries will not deceive us; the King of universe will return. Amen. Even, if the entire world disputes Christ's coming, he will return. Amen. With this in mind let us pray. Dear Jesus, our King, please continue to reign in us so that evil powers have no place in us while we are waiting for your triumph Advent. Teach us how to be watchful and how to avoid the deceitful spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, (Eph 2:2). Hear us O Lord, ever One God in Christ Jesus through all eternity. Amen

* Friends, the scientists prove our belief that there is nothing eternal in the universe except the powers that sustain it. Everybody dies, even stars and galaxies. We also will die if Christ's Advent will not happen before we die. Friends, does it fill your hearts with grief? No, It doesn't. We are blessed people because we are given to believe in Jesus Christ: - a little babe in the manger; - the servant of the Lord; - the Man of sorrow; - One who was crucified, died, yet rose from the dead. We are given to believe in Jesus' ascension into heaven and his return in the glory of his Father at the end of the world in order to complete his work of redemption. Jesus said, *My words will not pass away! But this world will pass away!* We are really blessed people because we are waiting for the King Jesus, and we are waiting for him eagerly. Amen

* Now, watching for the signs of Jesus' coming, I saw one a few days ago. I read that the American Humanist Association has launched a new advertising campaign. It has already started in five cities -- Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco during this Thanksgiving

weekend. "No God?...No Problem!" proclaim the ads mounted on the side and tail of buses running across megalopolises. Now it is noticeable, a new kind of holiday tradition gradually replaces the traditional Christmas. The world without God seems more reliable and peaceful for humanists. Their philosophy promotes the idea of being good without God. Humanism became popular among the rapidly growing non religious population.

* Friends, the world has changed a few times dramatically since Jesus' ascension. Please keep in mind the two illustrations from *The Sunday School Times* dated 1854 and the other one in connection with the activities of the American Humanist Association, dated November, 2009. First, no doubt, the world wants us to forget about past and future Advents. And second, the world is getting less Christian. These two are the real signs of upcoming tribulations.

* Beloved, Jesus says, *when you will see these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near, (Lk 21:28). And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, (Lk 21:25. 26).* When we see these disturbances, let us be reminded of the rapidly approaching return of our Lord to judge the wicked and to save those who are eagerly waiting for him, (Heb 9:28).

Beloved, the grace and mercy of the Lord be with you always even in the day of his coming.

Amen