

The real and pseudo-signs (Mr 13:24-31)

* Friends only six weeks separate us from Christmas, can you believe it? It is hard to believe because the cold season is not yet here; the sun is shining, the birds are singing and the grass is green. Well, in spite of my weak belief some strong believers are already immersed into the Christmas syndrome. In a moment the supermarkets have filled up with the green, gold and red decorations. The feeling and anticipation of a variety of pleasant things also have taken place in minds and hearts. The Christmas season is not ahead anymore; the Christmas signs are everywhere. When I look over that phenomenon *I wonder as I wonder, out under the sky, How Jesus the Saviour did come for to die. For poor, orn-'ry people like you and like I; I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.* Unlike artificial signs of Christmas that deceive people regarding times and events, the natural signs of the times we are living now can help with the knowledge of truth, and that is to fear God and love God. The real sign of the season is the sweet aroma of ripe apples that have fallen and smashed upon the concrete driveway; that is the real sign of the season Advent. It is a little sad to think about but, thinking pragmatically, it is still beneficial if you eat these apples even though they were smashed; meanwhile the artificial signs of Christmas are not healthy at all, just colored plastic that was filled with air.

* Friends, as much as you were given to see the needs of poor people like you and like me, then, ask the Lord according to your needs personally in such a way. O bountiful and gracious God, how great and glorious, how rich and mighty are You! I plead to You for the sake of my Lord Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit; give me a godly heart; convert me; enlighten me that I may daily meet your will. Help me to struggle and labor, that I can conquer evil desires, put away bad habits, separate myself from this world and bless me to enter into the world-to-come where I may be united with You in love forevermore. Amen.

* The Gospel reading for today provides us with the certain knowledge of the signs of the last days. Particularly these signs will appear at the end of the great tribulations, and they will precede the Lord's coming in the flesh. Unlike other signs, these signs are universal, they will be seen from all corners of our planet. Here I mean the sun and moon. At a certain moment they will stop functioning properly, (Mat 24:29). Therefore all people, and it doesn't matter where they will live and what hours it will be, will receive a warning sign. The next phenomenon will occur when the dazzling shower of celestial bodies fall down. The panorama of

heavenly drama will astonish the spectaculars with a vision of the Son of Man surrounded by clouds of angels, coming in power, (Mar 13:26). Watch out! O daughter of Zion, O Israel! Fear and rejoice! For the Lord alone is holy and he has been revealed by his righteous acts, (Rev 15:4). According to the Scriptures, Christ will come to take the faithful out of this world and to judge this world.

* The knowledge pertaining to the end of the world was not so clear so clearly understood by OT believers but in the last days God spoke the mystery of his coming through Jesus Christ and his apostles. During three and half years of Christ's ministry the anticipations of global changing gradually grew as the disciples recognized in the man Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. They believed the time was coming when Jesus would judge the wicked, free the Jews from Rome and restore the prosperity of the Davidic kingdom. But when Jesus started teaching that he must suffer the a cross, and on the third day rise from the dead, (Luk 24:46) and return to the Father, (Joh 16:6), then the disciples were greatly frustrated, especially after Jesus' crucifixion. Some of them said, *But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened,* (Luk 24:21).

* But thanks be to the Lord forever, the story of our salvation received a new impulse in Christ's resurrection, ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the birth of the Church ... and what is next? Friends, see how many things were left behind, with the exception of one thing – *Parousia*, the Christ's appearing a second time. Taking into account this remark, we cannot escape a question, *Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* (Act 1:6).

* Significantly, the Christians from all ages considered their time as the end of times. I found at least the two reasons why we think like that. First, the Scripture very clearly says that nobody knows that year, day or that hour, except the Father, (Act 1:6; Mar 13:32), and because it can happen of any time, the disciples were commanded, *Be on guard, keep awake,* (Mar 13:33) and watch for the signs of Christ's coming. Therefore if we are wise enough, we should live in such a way: *watching, watching and watching,* (Psa 130:6). Second reason, because tribulations and temptation are always here and sometimes they are intensified, some Christians may believe that the time of waiting is over.

* Considering this double-point Bearing on this double point I didn't find anything wrong if the

apocalyptic expectations increase fear and love of God in devotional hearts. But the unwilling scenario is when Christians stop watching as result of poison ideas that being spread by false prophets and teachers. There are at least three false teachings satan wants us to believe. First false teaching, they will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation, (2Pe 3:4). Second, they will say that Christ's coming has already occurred sometime in the past and it will never happen again, (Preterism). And third, when Antichrist comes they will force us to believe that the false messiah is the real One, (Mat 24:24).

* Here some examples from the past and present speak vividly of the false ideas that were believed. Here in the US, in 1831, a Baptist minister named William Miller after many calculations, announced that the Second Advent would occur in 1843 or 1844. Thousands of enthusiasts believed him, and even sold their possessions, gave money to the poor and followed after William Miller. But when the world did not end in 1844, many of Miller's followers were bitterly disappointed. Some of them probably stopped watching at all.

* It is sad to know but is a fact that there are still many enthusiasts in the US and around the world who continue to believe a person. The person and his followers want us to believe that Christ's return will happen in 2012! But how did they got that? Good question. The false teachers pointed out certain signs. They are as follows: - the Mayan Calendar Stops December 21, 2012; - Sun & Moon & Planets started shining 7 times brighter incising gamma rays; - Hurricanes, Flooding, Tornados, Fires; - "Swine Flu, Bird Flu; - the financial system soon will crash (more than 120 banks failed this year); economical and other crises will come; - the Global Warming causes starvation and death in the poor countries. There are some other signs, *The Smart Chip* has been approved for human implant, Antichrist has arrived and two OT's witnesses as well, (see [www. GODSTWOWITNESSES. COM](http://www.GODSTWOWITNESSES.COM)).

* Friends, we are entering into a new phase of negative experiences and anticipations of the global changing that have never been known before. But it is still only a prelude. How should we respond? Jesus promises to be with the disciples, (Mt 28:20), even to the end of the ages. He knows each of us individually and we should know him. Many times Jesus demonstrated his love and faithfulness to us, caring for our needs. ***Because (my beloved) holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he***

calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation. (Psa 91:14-16). Friends, remember, each coming day leads us one step away from Christmas and one step closer to the Second Advent. Now the time of preparation is here, watch out for the real signs and see the rocks ahead. Beloved, let the Lord guide us toward a way of righteousness and peace, Amen.