

# SIGNS OF THE LORD'S COMING

**BIBLE TEXT** : Nahum 2:3, 4; II Timothy 3:1-5; II Peter 3:3, 4; James 5:7, 8; Matthew 24:3-28.

LESSON 362 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:1-5).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Nahum 2:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men *are* in scarlet: the chariots *shall be* with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken.

<sup>4</sup> The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.

### **2 Timothy 3:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

<sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

<sup>3</sup> Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

<sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

<sup>5</sup> Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

### **2 Peter 3:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

<sup>4</sup> And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

### **James 5:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> Be patient therefore, brethren,

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **Signs given in the Book of Nahum and in II Timothy**

1. The automobile is graphically portrayed, Nahum 2:3, 4.
2. Cutting down of the fir tree is prophesied, Nahum 2:3.
3. A vivid account of moral conditions of the last days is given, II Timothy 3:1-5,

#### **2 Timothy 3:13**

<sup>13</sup> But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

#### **James 5:5**

<sup>5</sup> Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

### **II Signs given by Peter and by James**

1. Scoffers will teach evolution, II Peter 3:3, 4; Romans 1:20-22.

#### **Romans 1:20-22**

<sup>20</sup> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

<sup>21</sup> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

<sup>22</sup> Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

2. The ingathering will be after the Latter Rain, James 5:7, 8;

#### **Joel 2:23-29**

<sup>23</sup> Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.

<sup>24</sup> And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

<sup>25</sup> And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

<sup>26</sup> And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

<sup>27</sup> And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

<sup>28</sup> And it shall come to pass afterward, *that I will* pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

<sup>29</sup> And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

#### **Acts 2:16-18**

<sup>16</sup> But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

<sup>17</sup> And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

<sup>18</sup> And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

<sup>8</sup> Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

### **Matthew 24:3-28**

<sup>3</sup> And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

<sup>5</sup> For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

<sup>6</sup> And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

<sup>7</sup> For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

<sup>8</sup> All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

<sup>9</sup> Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

<sup>10</sup> And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

<sup>11</sup> And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

<sup>12</sup> And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

<sup>13</sup> But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

<sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom

### **III Signs given by Matthew**

1. Many false prophets shall rise, Matthew 24:3-5, 11, 23-26;

#### **1 Timothy 4:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

<sup>2</sup> Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

<sup>3</sup> Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

#### **1 John 2:18**

<sup>18</sup> Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

2. There will be world-wide conflict, Matthew 24:6, 7;

#### **Mark 13:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet.

<sup>8</sup> For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

#### **Luke 21:9**

<sup>9</sup> But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

#### **Luke 21:10**

<sup>10</sup> Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

3. There will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in many places, Matthew 24:7, 8.

4. The Jews will be persecuted, Matthew 24:9, 10;

#### **John 16:2**

<sup>2</sup> They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

#### **Amos 9:9**

<sup>9</sup> For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

#### **Amos 9:10**

<sup>10</sup> All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

5. There will be a falling away from the faith, Matthew 24:12, 13;

#### **2 Thessalonians 2:3**

<sup>3</sup> Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

6. The Gospel will be preached unto all nations, Matthew 24:14;

#### **Matthew 28:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

<sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

7. The coming of the Great Tribulation is told, Matthew 24:15-22;

#### **Daniel 12:1**

<sup>1</sup> And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

8. The coming of the Lord will be as swift as the lightning, Matthew 24:27, 28, 42-44.

shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

<sup>15</sup> When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

<sup>16</sup> Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

<sup>17</sup> Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

<sup>18</sup> Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

<sup>19</sup> And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

<sup>20</sup> But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

<sup>21</sup> For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

<sup>22</sup> And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

<sup>23</sup> Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

<sup>24</sup> For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

<sup>25</sup> Behold, I have told you before.

<sup>26</sup> Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

<sup>27</sup> For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

<sup>28</sup> For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered

## **NOTES:**

### **The Raging of Chariots**

Many years ago some pioneers drove their oxcarts along uncharted trails to reach the west coast of the United States. Today more than 50 million motor vehicles speed their way across great superhighways to all parts of the land. The dangers of the road have changed, too, from that of the Indians and the wilds to a collision less than every four seconds, with someone's being injured on the road less than every 26 seconds, and one killed less than every 14 minutes. Could anyone visualise such a change? Hardly. Yet, wait; here is a prophet who wrote more than 2,700 years ago: "The chariots shall be with flaming torches . . . shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings" (Nahum 2:3, 4). What a description — "with flaming torches" — the sealed beam headlights piercing the darkness before them; "rage in the streets" — the impatient honking of horns, as someone waits too long for a signal; "justle one against another" — millions of collisions in one year; "in the broad ways" — eight-lane or more freeways leading into many cities; "shall seem like torches" — watch them from some vantage point on a dark night; "shall run like the lightnings" — more than a mile a minute seems slow on our highways. Nahum must have watched our automobiles.

Why should such a revelation be given to the prophet? What is the significance of this? It marks the "day of his preparation." These signs are given to alert people to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Let us consider these along with other signs concerning His coming.

### **Timber**

"The fir trees shall be terribly shaken" (Nahum 2:3). Driving along toward the coasts of some African Countries, we pass through a beautiful stretch of tall, stately, fir timber. Stopping the car to enjoy the freshness of a verdant virgin forest, we have that feeling of smallness and of being alone with nature. We take a few steps into the timber. Light shines through the trees; is it a meadow or a lake? Investigation reveals naked hills. A pang strikes us as we awaken to the fact that we are in a forest corridor. There is just a token or remnant of the pristine firs that once clothed the mountains. The fir trees have been terribly shaken. It is the day of His preparation. At first there seems to be little connection between the fir trees and the chariots in Nahum's prophecy. But driving on down the highway, we see truck after truck passing, loaded with great long logs, speeding toward the mill. We see how closely allied the automobile is to the logging industry. Logging trucks and modern logging operations have reached out, like the tentacles of a giant octopus, into our virgin forests, to shake terribly the fir tree.

### **Evolution**

"As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28). For the past generation, in the schools and colleges which should prepare young men and young women for a full, rich, and productive life, youth is led to believe through the teaching of evolution that God is not the Creator of the universe, that the Bible is unscientific and out of date, that men are gods, that men are not responsible to God's or to man's authority, that there is no Heaven and no hell. So they say, "Why not indulge today in anything and everything the heart or the physical body desires?"

The teaching of the theory of evolution has spread over the

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whole earth. "No concept," writes an editor, "since the advent of Christ and the writing of the New Testament has had such an enormous transforming influence over every area of man's thinking, as the doctrine of evolution, especially since the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species, in 1859." And perhaps no concept, we might add, has had such an evil influence.

Peter foretold that the mark of the last days would be "scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Peter 3:3, 4). Many today claim to believe in God, and yet accept the theory of evolution and deny the Bible account of creation. They deny the God who created them and have set up a god of their own creation. Their very scoffing comes as a warning to the true believer that these are the last days.

### **Lust and War**

"Walking after their own lusts" has caused this generation to be in a constant state of war. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war" (James 4:1, 2). "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24:7). This strife that Jesus said would mark the time of his coming stems from the lust of the heart, which has dethroned God and enthroned man.

A heart left to its own lust degenerates rapidly, and thus it is today that we are in the midst of conditions that Paul described as the perilous times of the last days. Proud man boasts of his own intellect and accomplishments; yet, look what a mess he has made of world affairs. He writes many books about child psychology, but is unable to cope with juvenile delinquency. "Without natural affection" and "dis-obedient to parents" describe the true condition of some African homes where, marriages have ended in divorce and children become wards of the court. Incontinent, unrestrained teen-agers are, by the thousands, turning to "dope" for the sake of a thrill, and soon become brutal, fierce criminals in order to continue the habit. Perilous times are here.

### **False Prophets**

"False accusers," "trucebreakers," and "traitors" -- these words describe not only the propaganda and actions of Communist Russia, but a degenerate condition frequently uncovered in official circles of our own government. "Pink fronts" find their way into religious realms, and preachers are found who live in adultery and declare it is impossible to live above sin. Heady, highminded, Modernist doctors of divinity despise those who teach the good old way of repentance, scoff at the atoning Blood of Calvary, and make mockery of the deity of Christ: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:5).

Not only do we have many "healers" going through the land making merchandise of the Gospel of Christ, but there are also many who make a claim of divinity for themselves, and have attained great followings. Jesus warned: "There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). We are warned not to be gullible even though great miracles are done, but to examine the life and doctrine of those who profess to teach Christ: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

## **Famines, Pestilences, and Earthquakes**

Fight polio, fight tuberculosis, fight cancer — these various campaigns with seals, march of currency, and other money-raising ideas call to our attention that pestilences which are a mark of the last days are increasingly found in “divers places” in spite of modern medical skill. Famine, too, stalks the world; a report by the Nationalist Chinese Government states that many millions Chinese people are facing starvation. Earthquakes are another reminder that the coming of the Lord is near. More earthquakes were recorded in the 20th century than in all the previous centuries since the birth of Christ; and without much surprise there may be more earthquakes in the 21st century than there were in the 20th.

## **A Hiss and a Byword**

The increased hatred for the Jew, which has been prevalent the world around, is another sign pointing to the coming of the Lord and should not be overlooked. “Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9). In our day many nations have singled out the Jew and marked him for destruction; while in others, as it may be, he is often made the subject of ridicule and hatred.

## **The Last Sign**

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; **and then shall the end come.**” It would seem that the last sign before His coming is the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, and so far as we know this sign has already been fulfilled. Are you ready for His coming?

“Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:7, 8). In Palestine the early rain fell at seedtime and the latter rain came just before the harvest, to bring the grain to fruition. The spiritual Early Rain fell at Pentecost, that the Gospel seed, being sown in all the earth, might take root. The Latter Rain began to fall in 1906. (See Lesson 281.) This came that the grain might be ripened for the harvest. “The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Give Nahum’s description of the automobile.
2. How is the high divorce rate of our nation a sign of the last days?
3. Give examples of people being “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”
4. How does the teaching of evolution enter into the signs of the coming of Christ?
5. What seems to be the last sign to be fulfilled before the coming of the Lord?
6. What is the spiritual meaning of the “early and latter rain”?
7. Give examples of traitors in our day. Trucebreakers.
8. Name some of the great earthquakes of recent years.
9. Name some of the pestilences of the last days.
10. Give examples of famine in our day.
11. When will the Lord come?
12. What signs remain yet to be fulfilled?