

## First Sunday in Advent

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 33:14-16

*The LORD's Eternal Covenant with David*

**14 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’**

**33:14-26** As in previous revelations of God’s eternal plan for mankind, Jeremiah’s vision of good things to come is not limited to the return of the chosen people from exile but penetrates to those days when the messianic Branch, sprung from David’s lineage, will establish His universal kingdom of grace. (TLSB)

**33:14** *the days are coming* – This is like getting a wake up call. It gets their attention. It is like a splash of cold water in the morning. This is like saying “stop what you are going and pay attention to what I have to say.” Many of the Jews in exile had gotten comfortable with their lot in life and were making the best of it. They had lost sight of the long view of their spiritual life. It is easy for us to do that too. That is why we celebrate Advent each year. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

*I will fulfill the promise I made* – *dabar* – To arrange in order to keep a promise. It is the “good word” that something will happen as it had been declared earlier. I will bring you back to this place. What wonderfully sweet words of grace and promise! The promise is always the good word – God’s good word – expressed personally, incarnationally, and universally in the Word, the Son – Jesus Christ. The promise here is not just the return of the Judean exiles; it includes much more. It is God’s earlier promise to both Judah and Israel (the northern kingdom destroyed in 722 BC, over 100 years before Jeremiah). It is God’s original plan of redemption, first articulated in Genesis 3:15 as to be carried out by the seed of Eve, then explained more fully as Abraham’s seed (Genesis 12:1-3) and the Son of David (2 Samuel 7). Yahweh frequently reaffirms and elaborates this promise throughout the OT. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

Jeremiah 29:10 “This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back.”

**33:15–16** Repeated from 23:5–6. (CSB)

**33:15** *righteous branch* – Jesus. Jeremiah wants to tell God’s people that not all is lost. This branch will grow a shoot of new life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

*spring up* – He would not only be a king but also a priest. For the Lord promised that the Levites would always have one to serve as priest before Him. He could not be as other high priests for they served only until they died. His service would have to extend beyond the temple and its worship, for that worship would be interrupted and finally cease altogether. (PBC)

*he shall execute* - *awsaw* – To get things done. To make it happen or to execute when it counts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

*justice and righteousness* - mishpat – A verdict or sentence. In this case the word comprises both “justification” (God’s “justice – undeserved grace or salvation) and “sanctification,” a norm of behavior corresponding to God’s norm. God’s justice salvation by grace through faith in the Christ’s death and resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

Ambrose writes, “He who looks upon the Son see, in portrait, the Father. Mark what manner of portrait is spoken of. It is Truth, Righteousness, the Power of God: not dumb, for it is the Word; not insensible, for it Wisdom; not vain and foolish, for it is Power; not soulless, for it is life; not death, for it is the Resurrection.” (NPN2 10:208) (TLSB)

**33:16** *it will be called.* † Because the righteous Branch from David’s line imputes his righteousness (23:6) to his subjects, they themselves will bear the holy name (for other examples see Jdg 6:24; Eze 48:35). (CSB)

The exact opposite of Judah’s current atmosphere is about to fall. Babylon’s forces are hr gates (Jere 6:6). There is no safety behind the walls made of stone and mortar. Jeremiah in prophetic vision sees the New Jerusalem and the kingdom of grace. Here there is safety and peace, for Jesus, the Prince of Peace, sits on David’s throne and rules with righteousness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

*the Lord is our righteousness* – By virtue of His righteousness imputed to the subjects of the King, they themselves will bear the holy name. They will have full access to the throne of God through His mediation, prefigured by the sacrifices offered by Israel’s priests. These long-range promises will be fulfilled as certainly as God lets day and night follow each other. (TLSB)

## EPISTLE – 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

### *Timothy’s Encouraging Report*

**9 For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, 10 as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? 11 Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, 12 and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.**

**3:9** *thanksgiving...God.* The preceding shows that Paul’s work of evangelism had been effective. He might have congratulated himself on work well done, but instead he thanked God for the joy he had from what God had done. (CSB)

A rhetorical question expressing awe and gratitude to God after hearing about the faith of the Thessalonians. (TLSB)

Words cannot express Paul’s deep gratitude for the faith and love demonstrated by the Thessalonian Christians. Grateful that they so well grasped the Gospel under his instruction, he gives thanks to God. Having learned of their firm stand in face of opposition, he reflect affectionately. Psalm 116:12 RSV comes to mind: “What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?” He is all but ecstatic about their mutual love “in God’s presence.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

It shows that what ever success Paul has had is directly due to what God has helped happen. Paul does well not to grab the credit but recognizes the real source of evangelism effectiveness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

*before our God* - emprosthen - In front of or in sight of. It reflects a consciousness of God' presence in the Christian's everyday life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

**3:10** *we pray* – deomai – To beg, binding oneself, petitioning, beseeching or making a request. This is quantified both as to frequency (night and day) and quality (as earnestly as possible). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

*most earnestly*. Translates a strong and unusual Greek compound word (found elsewhere in the NT only in 5:13; Eph 3:20) that brings out Paul's passionate longing. (CSB)

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.”

1 Thessalonians 5:13 “Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”

*Night and day*. Not prayer at two set times, but frequent prayer (see 1:2–3). (CSB)

*what is lacking* - eido – To see in a sense to know or be aware of something. To be sure.

*Supply* - katartizo – To complete thoroughly . To repair or restore.

*what is lacking*. Some of the things lacking were of a practical nature, such as moral (4:1–12) and disciplinary matters (5:12–24). Others were doctrinal, such as confusion over Christ's return (4:13–5:11). (CSB)

husterema - What is in want or has a deficit.

Their trust in God was not defective. Rather, they needed instruction in certain matters. (TLSB)

*your faith*. The fifth time in the chapter that Paul speaks of their faith (see vv. 2, 5–7). (CSB)

Paul really wanted to mingle face to face with these Macedonian Christians. He hankered to build upon their basic beliefs so as to render them stronger still in faith and life. Paul did provide them (4:1-5:22) with a detailed listing for ongoing instruction in the Christian faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

**3:11–13** Paul expresses his wishes in a prayer for the Thessalonians after he has heard the encouraging report Timothy brought back. (TLSB)

**3:11** In the middle of a letter Paul frequently breaks into prayer (e.g., Eph 1:15–23; 3:14–21; Php 1:9–11; Col 1:9–12). For the link between Father and Son see note on 1:1. (CSB)

*God and Father...Lord Jesus* – God the Father and Christ are joint subjects of the sentence. The same function is ascribed to God the God the Father and to Jesus, who has divinity and equality with God the Father as the Second Person of the Trinity. (TLSB)

*direct our way* – He breaks into prayer here. He had been previously prevented from coming by Satan (2:18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

Paul knows that he will return to Thessalonica if the Lord of the church wills it. The devil may erect blockades, but the Lord “clears the way.” (LL)

**3:12** *the Lord*. In Paul’s writings this usually means Jesus rather than the Father. (CSB)

Ambrose: “Who, then, is the Lord.... He has named the Father and has named the Son; Whom, then, has he joined with the Father and the Son except the Spirit? Who is the Lord Who establishes our hearts in holiness” (NPNF 2 10:149). (TLSB)

In the midst of his own persecution, Paul managed to keep his focus on the one in charge, the Lord of the church. The Lord is like the fixed point of reference that allows a spinning dancer or skater to maintain her axis and orientation. The Lord is like the lighthouse that immovably signals land and shelter no matter how great the storm. (LL)

*increase and abound* – They were to love each other and also those outside of their congregation. Many times the great love shown within a congregation comes to the attention of those outside of it and draws them in. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

Spiritually, not numerically. Cf Eph 3:16. (TLSB)

*we do for you* - stayridzo – To set fast, turn resolutely, confirm or establish.

1 Corinthians 1:2 “To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours.”

**3:13** *establish*. Stability encompassing the whole personality. (TLSB)

*blameless* - hageosoonay – Sacredness or holiness.

Holy in word and action; the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in a person’s life through Word and Sacrament. (TLSB)

*holiness*. The basic idea is “set apart [for God].” Here it refers to the completed process of sanctification. (CSB)

Refers not only to the end times but also to the presence of the risen Lord among His people. (TLSB)

*with all His saints*. Even though there are references in the NT connecting angels with the Lord’s appearing (Mk 8:38; 13:27; Rv 19:14), here it may mean “the revealing of the sons of God” in association with the Lord. On the Last Day, the saints will come in glory, not to continue an earthly life. (TLSB)

**3:6–13** Paul gives thanks and prays for the Thessalonians when he hears the good report from Timothy that they are standing in their faith and have the same kind of love for him as he has for them. Our faith in the Lord and love for one another should be as living and contagious as that of the Thessalonians. The Lord, who has promised to be with us until the end of time, will keep us in His faith and kindle His love in our hearts so that we may love Him and one another. • We praise You, O God, because the gates of hell cannot prevent the sown seed of Your Word from growing. Amen. (TLSB)

#### GOSPEL – Luke 21:25-36

##### *The Coming of the Son of Man*

**25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”**

**21:25-36** The shift to the second part of Luke’s eschatological discourse, from prophecy about the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem (21:5–24) to predictions about the end the world (21:25–36), is subtle. Luke gives no signals in his framework: no change of audience, location, or time. But both *form* and *content* are now apocalyptic.

L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 330, comments on what is distinct about Luke’s shaping of Jesus’ final eschatological discourse: “There are two remarkable aspects of this final stage of the prophecy. The first is that it entirely lacks any temporal reference or time-table. ... The second striking feature is the attention given to moral exhortation.” (CC p. 800)

The chief feature in Luke’s arrangement of the prophecy is the coming of the Son of Man (21:27–36), but a brief yet powerful reference to the signs and conditions that accompany the end of the world comes first. This brief section *is the only time in Luke that he describes the signs that will accompany the end of the world!* (CC p. 800)

**21:25-26** These verses describe a world that is coming apart. Everything that was dependable is no longer so. Even scientific laws don’t work in this end time scenario. The disciples asked for signs, and here they are, signs in sun, moon, and stars. What kind of signs? Quite likely the signs that Jesus referred to in Matt 24:29, quoting from Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7 and Joel 2:30-31). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

The chaos on the earth before the creation (Gen 1:2) has returned, and nations cannot fathom what is happening. No fiction writer could create a more frightening picture than this one, for the “heavenly bodies” and those on the earth are being “shaken” like a rag doll in a puppy’s mouth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

The fearful portents and signs from heaven in 21:11 are unusual natural phenomena, which go with the other natural and historical disasters of that verse. But those in 21:25–26 are apocalyptic, catastrophic changes in the sky that indicate that the world is coming unglued. God’s orderly creation becomes unstable and reverts toward chaos as the Creator begins to withdraw his benevolence. God’s goodwill toward the originally good work of his hands is increasingly turning into anger as his patience runs out with corrupt and perverse humanity. (CC p. 801)

Those who have invested everything in this world and this life will be shocked and literally “scared to death” by what the end of time brings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

**21:25** Jesus focuses more directly on the events relating to the end of the world. (TLSB)

*signs.* Cosmic events (eclipses, comets) and earthly events (storms, tidal waves) prepare for the ultimate catastrophe; creation itself is torn apart. (TLSB)

Note that the signs described in 21:10-11 are preludes to the destruction of the temple. All the events described thus far could be located during the Jewish war of A.D. 66-73. Parallel signs are described at the beginning of Jesus’ description of the end of the world, but the very fact that Luke repeats those items in another section of eschatological discourse suggests two similar but distinct events. It will seem as if the end of the world is near when the temple is destroyed, for it will be a sign of judgment by God on Israel for rejecting her Messiah – and a portent of God’s final judgment upon all who reject the Christ. (CC p. 793)

*earth* – γῆς—“Earth,” not “land” as in 21:23, for the focus has spread from Israel to the whole earth. (CC p. 786)

*nations* – ἐθνῶν—“Nations,” not just “Gentiles” as in its three occurrences in 21:24, because the entire world, Jews and Gentiles, is now in focus. (CC p. 786)

Worldwide confusion at these events. (TLSB)

*distress...perplexity* – ἀπορία ἤχους θαλάσσης—The genitive following ἀπορία, “in perplexity,” identifies that which evokes the perplexity (CC p. 786)

*roaring of the sea and waves* – The sea itself is its own storm center, and the wind itself is driven by the sea and not the other way around. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

**21:26** *people fainting* – Reaction moves from confusion to fear. (TLSB)

ἀποψυχόντων ἀνθρώπων—This genitive absolute describes the impact the “anguish of nations in perplexity at the sound and tossing of the sea” from the previous verse has upon human beings. (CC p. 786)

Note from Revelation **21:1** NO LONGER ANY SEA – To ancient people the sea held a terror especially when its boiling waves threatened and often destroyed human life (e.g. Ps 107:23-30). In the early stage of creation the waters were associated with the darkness and the primeval formlessness and chaos (Gen. 1:2). The sea is the home to the evil serpent (Amos 9:3), Leviathan. In the earthly ministry of Jesus too, the sea was a threat to the apostles, a threat which Jesus conquered (e.g., Mt. 8:24-27; 14:24-33). The sea is the primeval ocean, symbol of chaos; its disappearance is assurance of God’s total victory. The absence of the sea from the new heaven and earth in the context of 21:1-8 suggests not the absence of water in the geo-physically renewed earth, but an absence of any fear of water and terror that the sea evoked, especially the absence of any painful reminder that God’s saints had once been separated from him. (CC pp. 593, 595)

*foreboding of what is coming* – φόβου καὶ προσδοκίας—This is probably a hendiadys, “fearful expectation.” The co-ordination of two ideas, one of which is dependent on the other. (CC p. 786)

*heavens will be shaken* – To waver, be toppled, stirred up, disturbed, incited or even destroyed – God’s orderly creation becomes unstable and reverts toward chaos as the Creator begins to withdraw his benevolence. God’s goodwill toward the originally good work of his hands is increasingly turning into anger as his patience runs out with corrupt and perverse humanity. (CC p. 801)

**21:27-36** The coming of the Son of Man only intensifies the fear of unbelievers. But for the faithful it is Good News. Therefore Jesus gives to his catechumens five final words to help them prepare “to stand in the presence of the Son of Man” (21:36b; the outer frame). These consist of four admonitions, with a promise in the center. The admonitions are governed by imperative verb forms (21:28—ἀνακύψατε [“straighten up”] and ἐπάρατε [“lift”]; 21:29–31—ἴδετε [“see”] and γινώσκετε [“know”]; 21:34–35—προσέχετε [“beware”]; 21:36a—ἀγρυπνεῖτε [“be watchful, awake”). In the center (21:32–33), however, stands a prediction (future indicative) surrounded by two emphatic promises (each with οὐ μὴ the first with an aorist subjunctive and the second with a future indicative). This whole center section is introduced by ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, “truly I say to you.” These words are the climax of Jesus’ teaching in this section. (CC p. 803)

**21:27** *they will see the Son of Man coming.* The time of Christ’s second coming (see Da 7:13). Often the predictions in this discourse refer ultimately to the end times, while at the same time describing the more imminent destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (CSB)

The visible return of the crucified and glorified Christ. (TLSB)

*in a cloud* – This indicates the glory associated with God (Ex. 40:34; Acts 1:9). (TLSB)

*great glory* – which means a very large number. Glory is doxa

Glory that brings about great dignity, honor, praise and worship. This is not reflected light like that of the moon but it is the light of the sun itself. The glory of the Lord is also shown in Exodus 40:34 when the Lord filled the tabernacle in the wilderness and in 1 Kings 8:11 when the ark is brought into Solomon’s temple. It is a very special way that shows his people that he keeps his promises.

**21:28** *straighten up* – To unbend and rise. Luke 13:10-13 describes a woman who was bent over for eighteen years. Jesus heals her and she straightens up. While others look down (doing so is often a sign of shame or guilt), Christians posture is erect because they know the Savior is coming. (CC p. 803)

*raise your heads.* Do not be downcast at the appearance of these signs, but look up in joy, hope and trust. (CSB)

Confident expectation of a blessed event. (TLSB)

ἀνακύψατε—While unbelievers cower in fear and hide their faces from the signs in the heavens, Jesus’ disciples are to stand erect and lift up their heads to see the Son of Man coming to liberate them. (Cf.

13:11, concerning the woman who, for eighteen years, could not straighten herself because of her bondage to Satan.) (CC p. 786)

The Psalmist writes, “He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the wings of the wind,” while Isaiah declares, “See the Lord rides on a swift cloud” (Ps. 104:3; Is. 19:1). God’s redemption makes His followers stand tall and lift up their heads in confident expectation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

*redemption.* Final, completed redemption. (CSB)

Deliverance from all forces of sin and evil. (TLSB)

ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις—Luke has few references to redemption, but they are important and frame his gospel. Toward the beginning of the gospel comes the hope for the “redemption” (λύτρωσις) of God’s people Israel (1:68) and Jerusalem (2:38). Toward the end of the gospel that same hope for the redemption (λυτρόομαι) of Israel will be expressed by the disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:21). Here in 21:28, also toward the gospel’s end and in a section pertaining to the world’s end, Jesus speaks of the “redemption” of his disciples throughout the world even after Jerusalem’s destruction. (The only additional occurrence of any derivative of λυτρόομαι in the Lukan corpus is λυτρωτής in Acts 7:35.) (CC p. 786)

**21:25–28** Jesus points to signs preceding His return. Today, fear and uncertainty should lead us to focus on His redemption. Pray earnestly for that day. Jesus’ return brings us full deliverance from all evil of this world. • Lord, keep us always expectant as we anticipate Your return. Amen. (TLSB)

### *The Lesson of the Fig Tree*

**29 And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**

**21:29** *Look at the fig tree.* The coming of spring is announced by the greening of the trees (cf. Mt 24:32–35; Mk 13:28–31). In a similar way, one can anticipate the coming of the kingdom when its signs are seen. But “kingdom” is used in different ways. The reference in v. 31 is to the future kingdom. (CSB)

It includes everyone who is converted by the Truth."

Anywhere there are trees, people will understand. (TLSB)

Jesus uses a parable to tell us that the signs of death are only ushering in the life that is to follow. The winter of this world’s existence will be over, and the dawning of God’s glorious kingdom will be seen. People of the kingdom will see it coming and will rejoice over the summer that is near. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

There are those who stir up the fears of devout Christians by their curious interpretations of Daniel, Revelation, and other apocalyptic sections of Scripture. There are Christians who face tremendous trials in their terrifying present. To both of these groups, these words reassure that God is in control. From a



human point of view, we feel a need to be in control at all times. Perhaps that explains the popularity of those who claim to “interpret the signs” today. They seek to be in control by knowing the unknowable times and events. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

Yet we cannot be the ultimate control. Indeed, we confess that we must not be. God must be. This text assures us that God is in control, even when everything seems completely out of control, even when the cold wind of winter tears at our lives. Look at the verbs that are used: Stand up! Look up! See who is coming! Want a picture? Look at the fig tree! Know that the kingdom of God is near! Jesus obviously wants to get through to His followers what to look for – then and now – and how to look – then and now. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

**21:31** *these things*. Associated with Christ’s return (cf vv 25–26). (TLSB)

*kingdom of heaven is near* – Esp when Christ returns in glory. (TLSB)

ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ—Luke continues to maintain the tension between the *now* and the *not yet*. (CC p. 786)

**21:32** *this generation*. If the reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred about 40 years after Jesus spoke these words, “generation” is used in its ordinary sense of a normal life span. All these things were fulfilled in a preliminary sense in the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. If the reference is to the second coming of Christ, “generation” might indicate the Jewish people as a race, who were promised existence to the very end. Or it might refer to the future generation alive at the beginning of these things. It does not mean that Jesus had a mistaken notion he was going to return immediately. (CSB)

Those who receive the signs of vv 25–26. Used nine times in Lk, always of an unbelieving portion of humanity. (TLSB)

This generation is represented by the religious establishment of Israel, which is hostile to Jesus. Here it refers to those in every age, whether the first century or the twenty-first, who reject the Gospel. There will continue to be unbelievers until the end, and all who reject Jesus will be included in the final judgment. (CC pp. 786-787)

**21:33** *my words will not pass away* – All material things will perish. But the Word of Jesus, who created all things, is everlasting. “He is not a mere man or angel, neither is He just true, wise, and mighty, but He is the eternal Truth and Wisdom itself and Almighty God. He knows very well what and how He is to speak. He can also powerfully effect and do everything that He says and promises” (FC SD VII 43). (TLSB)

Although everything may end (or appear to be over for us in our individual lives), one possession will endure forever. It is the Word of our God, the Word of life, the Word found in and through the Word, Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

When the world passes away those who reject Jesus’ teaching will pass away with it. But those who hear and keep His Word will remain and inherit the kingdom He has prepared for them. (CC p, 805)

Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

**21:29–33** Jesus points to the sure coming of God’s kingdom through the budding of a fig tree, and He promises that His teachings will abide forever. Do not ignore the sure signs and words of His coming.

More firm than this creation is His promise of return and new creation for you. • Lord, give us eyes to see the signs of Your coming kingdom and hearts to trust Your abiding Word. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Watch Yourselves*

**34 “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” 37 And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. 38 And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.**

**21:34** *watch*. Jesus warns His followers about being dulled by worldly concerns. (TLSB)

*drunkenness*. Used only here in the NT; lit, a “drinking bout,” but generally the distractions of daily life (8:14; 12:22). “A true and not a false putting to death [mortification] happens through the cross and troubles, by which God exercises us.... There is also a necessary, voluntary exercise.... These exercises are to be accepted not because they are services that justify, but because they are assumed to control the flesh, should overindulgence overpower us, and make us secure and unconcerned. This results in people indulging and obeying the tendencies of the flesh” (Ap XV 45–47). (TLSB)

Following his promise, Jesus gives two practical and pastoral admonitions in forms familiar to the catechumen from earlier in the gospel. The first imperative, “beware” (προσέχετε; 21:34), recalls three earlier warnings (the only other passages in Luke with this verb): beware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (12:1), of those who cause scandals and sins (17:3), and of the scribes’ love for public recognition (20:46). All of these are warnings against people who offer a false catechesis that leads to unrighteousness. Jesus’ final admonition now is to beware of those things in life that cloud our awareness of his imminent return and the fast-approaching end of the world: “dissipation and drunkenness and anxieties of daily life” (21:34; ἐν κραυπάλῃ καὶ μέθῃ καὶ μερίμνας βιωτικαῖς; cf. Is 24:20). These are the kinds of distractions Jesus warned the disciples about in the parable of the sower, where the seed among thorns represents people who are “choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of this life and do not bear fruit to maturity” (8:14; cf. 12:45; 14:33). The catechumen is called to avoid these things in order to maintain a clear mind, lift up his head (21:28), and watch. For the end “will come upon *all* [πάντας] those who dwell on the face of the *whole* [πάσης] earth” (21:35). There are *no* exceptions. (CC p. 805)

*that day*. When Christ returns and the future aspect of God’s kingdom is inaugurated (cf. v. 31). (CSB)

When Christ returns. (TLSB)

*come upon you suddenly*. Does not mean that Christ’s second coming will be completely unannounced, since there will be introductory signs (vv. 28, 31). (CSB)

Christ is concerned about the heart. Concern for the kingdom gets sidetracked by allowing one’s life to get weighted down. The terms refer primarily to the effects of alcohol abuse. However, it is most likely that Jesus is referring to every pursuit that new dangers one’s soul. The “anxieties of life” are something most people easily related to – and clearly refer to more than partying. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

The entire context appears to describe those who get drugged into thinking that can live apart from God and ignore His Word. Soon what matters is everything except the Lord and His kingdom. The “weighing

down” appears to happen quite unexpectedly and almost automatically, simply by virtue of living in the midst of a fallen world. The world by nature cannot look up. Instead, weighted down, it can only look down at it can see and measure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

*like a trap.* The unexpectedness of that day will catch the unprepared. (CSB)

**21:35** *all who dwell.* No one escapes the final judgment. (TLSB)

*the whole earth.* The second coming of Christ will involve the whole of mankind, whereas the fall of Jerusalem did not. (CSB)

No one escapes the final judgment. (TLSB)

**21:36** *stay awake ... praying.* One remains prepared and watchful by persevering in prayer. (TLSB)

To keep awake and be sleepless. – This is to happen in every season and at all times of each day. One aspect of remaining watchful is prayer. Another is to be in the Scriptures frequently. (CC p. 805)

Watchfulness reminds one of all the other calls to watch: 1 Thess 5:1-11; Matt 24:42-44; 25:1-13; Mark 14:32-37. Prayers designates complete dependence upon God, for no one can stand on their own in the face of what is to happen to them and to the heavens and the earth. The escape is not to cower or run for safety. It is to run toward the Son of Man and to stand – boldly and confidently – before Him. He who comes to judge will be our joy! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

*stand before the Son of Man.* Lit, “to be made to stand,” i.e., by grace. Believers will stand unharmed in Christ’s judgment, greeting it with heads held high (v 28). (TLSB)