

Jesus is Coming

The gospel for this coming Sunday (First Sunday in Advent) is Luke 21:25-36. This text has three sections. All of them focus on Jesus' second coming.

The first message (verses 25-28) is Jesus pointing 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. Jesus invites his disciples, then and now, to *raise your heads*. We should not be downcast at the appearance of these signs, but look up in joy, hope and trust.

The second narrative (verses 29-33) is the lesson of the fig tree. The coming of spring is announced by the greening of the trees. In a similar way, one can anticipate the coming of the kingdom when its signs are seen. 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.

The last verse in this segment leaves us with incredible solace. 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.

The third section (verses 34-36) urges a keen sense of watchfulness. There are many things that can weigh us down during this time of shopping, planning and general disorder. Jesus warns His followers about being dulled by worldly concerns. The entire context appears to describe those who get drugged into thinking that can live apart from God and ignore His Word. 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.

He who comes to judge will be our joy! Believers will stand unharmed in Christ's judgment, greeting it with heads held high. We have his gift of prayer and his word to keep us at the ready.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for your words of readiness. Help us to be fervent in prayer and in your word so that we may be ever ready. Amen