

Look up, Your Redemption Is Drawing Near

SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2021

GOSPEL READING: Luke 21:25-28,34-36

25 "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men 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, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." 34 "But take heed to 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 snare; 35 for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. 36 But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man."

SCRIPTURE READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

14 "Behold the days are coming, says 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 forth 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.'"

Meditation: How good are you at reading signs, especially signs which God sends our way? The people of Jesus' time expected that the coming of the Messiah would be accompanied by extraordinary signs and wonders. Jesus' first coming was clouded in mystery and surprising wonderment: Even though he was the rightful heir to the throne of King David, he was born in obscurity in a cave at Bethlehem, near the place where David had watched over his father's sheep some 1000 years before. A choir of mighty angels chose to announce the good news to a small band of lowly shepherds keeping their night watch nearby. Learned magi from the East, who recognized a great omen in the heavenly sky, followed the star until it led them to Bethlehem. They alone found the child with his mother and paid him homage as the newborn king of Israel. When Jesus humbly submitted to baptism at the River Jordan, the heavenly Father spoke audibly for those nearby who were willing to listen, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."

Signs which point to the Lord's coming to reign with power and great glory

Jesus, during his public ministry performed numerous signs: turning water into wine, calming the storm at sea and walking on water, multiplying seven loaves of bread in the wilderness to feed 5000 people, healing the blind and the lame, expelling demons, and raising the dead. While many believed in Jesus, many also questioned his signs and refused to believe his claim to be the Messiah sent by the heavenly Father to suffer and die for our sake and for our salvation on the cross of Calvary. Jesus' last and greatest sign during his earthly ministry was his rising from the tomb on the third day after his crucifixion. This sign demonstrated his power to defeat death itself and to give abundant everlasting life to all who believed in him.

Jesus told his disciples that his final great sign would be his return in glory at the end of the age. He would come this second time as Judge and Merciful Redeemer to vindicate those who accepted him as Lord and Saviour and to punish those who rejected him.

The Jews of Jesus' day were looking for a Messiah King who would free them from the oppressive rule of pagan Rome. Many had hoped that Jesus would be their victorious conqueror. They missed, however, the

most important sign and reason for the Messiah's first coming - his death on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world and his triumphant victory over death and Satan when he rose on the third day. The Lord Jesus is both the "Son of David", the rightful heir and Messiah King of Israel whose reign will endure for all ages (Psalm 89:3-4,29,36-37) - and the "Son of Man", chosen by God as the anointed ruler who will come at the end of the age to establish a universal kingdom of peace, righteousness, and justice for all the nations and peoples of the earth.

The Messiah comes to "execute justice and righteousness in the land"

The prophet Jeremiah foretold the day when God would send his Messiah King to "execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jeremiah 33:15). Jesus is the fulfillment of this promise and every promise which God has made. The Lord Jesus, through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, assures us of his abiding presence and the promise that he will return again. His Holy Spirit gives us supernatural hope, and the strength to persevere with joyful confidence until the Lord comes again. What kind of hope does the Lord offer us? He gives us the hope of heaven, seeing God face to face, sharing in the fullness of his glory and everlasting life. When the Lord comes again as our Judge and merciful Redeemer he will right every wrong, vindicate every person who has accepted him as Lord and Saviour, and remove all sorrow, pain, and death itself (Revelations 21:4). The world around us is plagued with greed, envy, strife, and uncertainty. It has lost hope in God and in his promise to restore the human race and all of creation when the Lord Jesus comes again.

Jesus' prophetic description of the end of time and the day of judgment was not new to the people of Israel. The prophets had foretold these events many centuries before. "Behold the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it" (Isaiah 13:9-13; see also Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14-18). Jesus speaks of the second coming as a known fact, a for certain event we can expect to take place. This coming will be marked by signs that all will recognize; signs which will strike terror in those unprepared and wonder in those who are ready to meet the Lord. When the Lord returns he will establish final justice and righteousness over the earth by overthrowing his enemies and by vindicating those who have been faithful to him. The anticipation of his final judgment is a sign of hope for all who trust in him.

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, may I never lose sight of the signs of your presence in my life and the signs of your action in the world today. Free me from spiritual dullness, indifference, and every distraction that would keep me from you. May I never tire of listening to your word, seeking you in prayer, and longing for your return in glory.
Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER:- Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of your love and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his truth. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. **Amen.**