

Notes for Next Sunday
First Sunday in Advent

The Point of this Week's Readings

The readings forecast the coming of Jesus and what He will do for those who believe in Him.

Old Testament (Jeremiah 33:14-16) In these verses Jeremiah is prophesying the birth of Jesus. This is the fulfillment of the promise made in the Garden of Eden after the Fall of Man. Jesus will be from King David's family tree. Jesus is called "The Lord Our Righteousness and makes right in the sight of God by His life, death and resurrection. Restored, Israel shall be a place of joy and rejoicing.

Epistle (1 Thessalonians 3:9-13) Paul begins by giving thanks to God for all the joy he and his co-workers have because of the Thessalonian Christians. Paul also reminds the Thessalonians that he is praying for them and then goes on to list some things he desires for them. The Epistle reminds us that the coming of Jesus now both prepares us for Jesus' final coming and is already a pre-figurement of that final coming.

Gospel (Luke 21:25-36) 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, sings 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

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 33:14-16

¹⁴”**‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. ¹⁵”‘In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.’**

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)

33:15 *a righteous branch.* This is 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)

EPISTLE – 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

⁹**How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. ¹¹Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹²May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.**

3:10 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)

3:10 your faith. 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)

3:13 will be blameless. Holy in word and action; the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in a person’s life through Word and Sacrament. (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.”

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)

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 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 creations 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)

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 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)

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)

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)

Watch Yourselfs

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)

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)