

Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up, raise your heads, your redemption is drawing near. The Lord is in the temple in our Gospel lesson. Mark it well, He will never be in that temple again; the consequences are beyond staggering. In the final words of the OT, Malachi 3, the Lord promised that He would come to His temple. In Malachi 4, He promised to send John the Baptist, the 2nd Elijah to prepare His people. Destruction is coming, yet His people will have joy, **will leap like calves.**

In our Gospel lesson, the Lord is come. Prophecy of Malachi fulfilled. In His temple, come to save and deliver. He's constantly warned people the wages of sin, constantly taught them of the Kingdom of God; to stop their sinful ways, their unrepentance, their own efforts, because that won't do. Turn to Him. The Lord in His temple with grace and life. Nothing better than that.

By the end of the week, the people make sure that He's not there anymore, they put Him to death. Jesus prophesy comes true, in that generation see the temple destroyed, along with the rest of Jerusalem.

Behold the terrible judgment upon God's chosen city Jerusalem and the end of the world. Even Jerusalem -destroyed in holy wrath because they refused to repent, receive the Christ.

He was patient, merciful; many abused God's patience, took His mercy for-granted. Not only Jerusalem's fall but every war, natural disaster, tragedy, disease: a solemn warning. The end is coming. His patience comes to an end. Do not abuse His grace. Repent. **The day is coming. Your redemption draws near.** Each day, one day closer to the end.

No one will escape wrath in that Day with excuses like, "I tried my best, I'm not as bad as others, I just did what I thought was right. I did it in the name of love." Just ask Jerusalem how well those work.

Live your life as His baptized child, act like it. Each day, faithful, **stay awake**, hold to His Word, doctrine. Encourage one another. Use what He has given you for others, have compassion on those around you.

The end is coming; not a surprise. Look around. See the signs, things in this world, even in your own life. Sin has taken its toll. The world is falling apart in front of us. Yet, He shows you, nothing to fear.

You are His witnesses, in a dark world that needs you to shine the light of truth, showing virtue, godly morality against forces of evil. You still

know the third commandment matters. You know the difference between boys and girls, the value of honest labor, that the past is full not just of criminals and violence but also with heroes, unsung mothers and fathers, inspired by God to do great and good things in faith -of which you are part- who left behind for us a glorious Christian heritage and this nation.

Jesus would have you know these endings -while they're terrifying, scary- are ultimately good news. **when these things begin to take place** -don't fear or be scared! **Straighten up, raise your heads, your redemption drawing near.**

Rejoice: the end is coming. The reign of sin will soon be over. Your salvation has been won. He will not abandon you. He will use temptation, even war, divorce, disaster around the globe or in your house, all the signs of the coming end, for your good. For by them He draws you closer to Him. He will teach you to rely upon Him. For you to see more of His love and care, to live in His grace and forgiveness.

Raise your heads. The Lord is coming back to claim His inheritance, claimed you, named by Him in waters of Holy Baptism. His forgiven, holy child, to take you home, reunited with loved ones. Raise your heads. You have brothers and sisters here. Raise your heads: the Lord is here. You will never be alone. Be neither afraid or sad. **Not even a hair on your head will perish.** On Thursday, a devout Christian couple, 85 years old, in Missouri, married 63 years, home on fire, the husband could get out to safety but unable to carry his wife out so he decide to stay, hold her, knowing they'd soon die. Knowing they would soon be in paradise. **not even a hair on their heads perish.** Nothing will truly harm His people. **Your redemption is here.**

And that is reason enough, to not only rejoice, but to let go of all your worries, concerns in this life. You're like Abraham standing in the promised land without an army, weak as a kitten against fortified cities, armies arrayed against you with all their technology and might to whom God says, this is all yours. A kingdom not of man but one He rules you with grace and forgiveness poured out in His blood to make you his dear child. To leap like calves, like children on Christmas morn. So it is, why we say in the communion liturgy, Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Your redemption draws near, even now the Lord here in His temple, in His supper, with His grace and life. And nothing is better in this life than that for you. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.