

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. ✠

That the world in which we live will not last forever; that some day heaven and earth with all that it contains will disappear, is indeed a clear teaching of Scripture. This great universe serves only a passing purpose, and when it has served its purpose, it will be torn down by the very one who built it. The world in which we live is but a tent for us men who are moving toward eternity, not fit for dwelling in forever, but sufficient for the night. When the last man has completed his pilgrimage, it will all be pulled down. It is no abiding city but the scaffolding of the eternal dwelling place our Lord has gone to prepare. Just as scaffolding is removed when the building is complete, so will the earthly creation be removed when the heavenly one is brought forth. All this is clear from Holy Scriptures and informs us that we must expect a Day of Judgement.

In our day, there are many who claim to be wise, who deny such a judgment, and there are others who, with great enthusiasm, insist they know the day and hour in which that great day will come, but all have been proven foolish. Not one has come to pass according to the prophecy of man, time has refuted them all, and those who believed them have been mocked by the “enlightened ones” of the world. So common is this plight of man that the world now scoffs at the very idea that there are still people who have not been made wise by such experiences and despite the myriad of false prophets, still claim that there is indeed a judgment coming.

But you, dear Christian, must not listen to the wise of this world; rather, enlighten yourselves with the Scriptures, bringing them to bear against all impious thoughts of the flesh so that you might know the truth. And what does God’s word say about this? That there is indeed a Judgment Day and that in these last days you must never imagine yourself safe.

Let us consider our Gospel text this morning.

Christ makes it clear it is foolish to think you will not suffer the Judgment Day. The signs of this day have already occurred. The Apostles told those who believed that Judgment Day is near, to hold themselves ready; they did not consider themselves safe from this judgment but knew they would soon undergo it. And if the Christians of Apostolic times, those who saw and heard Christ with their

own eyes, who sat at the feet of the blessed Apostles, did not consider themselves safe, should you not do the same? We are closer to this day than they; you have no right to think it will not happen to you. So pray earnestly to your Lord, who has promised you salvation in that day, consider the times in which you live, and consider that all of this that you love and treasure will indeed be destroyed.

Now you might say, but does not Christ say, that before the son of man comes, **There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations**, these things have not come to pass so I have no need to concern myself with that day.

Do not think that these signs in the sun and the moon and the stars must be some great miraculous sign, for these things have come to pass. The wise of the world say, "It cannot be the simple rising and setting of the sun", as if it does not tell us daily of the setting of the age and the return of Christ shining as bright as the sun rising in the east. No, they say, "It can't be the swirling of the stars above us and the circling of the constellations", and they are blind that these things are to us like vultures circling an animal dying in the wilderness. The wise of the world say we understand why stars are darkened, and the moon and sun change in the sky above us but yet they miss the reality that is right in front of them. And certainly, the distress of nations has come upon us for many centuries. There have been wars, rumors of wars, nations rising against nations, earthquakes, and all the signs of the end times have indeed come to pass. Look around you and see the great wave of anxiety and stress of the generations. People are fainting with fear because they cannot discern what is to come. There is a great fear of the future which is discernible from the world around us and present in the hearts of men, and yet they do not see the answer.

And yet where do you turn? Where does the world turn in the face of this great distress? To the cares of this life, you turn for comfort to eating, drinking, building, planting, buying, and selling. And yet, these things have become so ornate, so luxurious, that you must be honest and confess that either we are heading for ruin or there must be a change. In the days of Noah, leading up to the flood, men gave themselves over to the same things, to such rampant gluttony and wickedness and evil,

and they did not see the signs. As Noah built the ark, he was mocked. Those who were so laden and weighed down with the cares of this world missed the signs of God's judgment.

This is happening again today. Day after day, the same conditions of gluttony continue. Day after day, the same conditions of this care of the world continue. There has never been such keenness and understanding and judgment among Christians in bodily and temporal things as there is now. We so easily pick apart one another, so easily even take each other to court, and hold grudges against one another. And yet, in our wisdom, we are blind.

But this isn't just in the cares of this world. Even our own luxury and gluttony have invaded the spiritual as well. Error, sin, and falsehood have crept into the ways of the church, have crept into the thinking of Christians. Never in the history of the world have we had such rampant, blatant heresy. as all sorts of church bodies that claim the name of Christ and yet preach and teach everything but him. Never in the history of the world have we had such schisms in the church that divide families, homes, and countries. People have attempted to abolish Christ in favor of their own cares and concerns. And we pretend like we don't see it coming. We mock those who would cry, repent. We don't treat it seriously. We comfort ourselves by saying, "Oh, but we have the gospel". There's no need to change. Most sermons are nothing more than "You're a horrible sinner, but that's okay because Jesus loves you, don't change, don't worry about anything, you are fine as you are". But it is not fine. Sin remains. Your sin, your gluttony, the cares of this life can choke out your faith. They can cause you to lose your sobriety on that judgment day. We are to treat them with great seriousness. And that is why we have the season of Advent.

So that we might see the signs around us and repent. So we might turn away from sin and wickedness, so that we might turn and be healed by the very one who is coming and be made new. So that we might be reminded our lives are not our own but bought with a price, so that we might be sober-minded and awake when our Lord comes. So that we might know that the Son of Man is coming, the Son of Man who has bought and purchased you with his blood, the Son of Man who has set you free to do his will, to live in righteousness and blessedness forever.

Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

✠ In Jesus' name. Amen. ✠