

## The Eschatological Constant

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent - Year C - 12/02/2018

Psalm Reading: 25:1-10

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Luke 21:25-36

### Introduction:

1. Jeremiah (NIV, 33:14) repeats God's Promise: *"The days are coming when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah."* And what is that promise?
  - a. (v.15) *"He will make a righteous branch spring from Jesse's line."*
    - Jesse father of David (root of Jesse)
    - Messiah - Savior
  - b. (v.16) *"Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety."*
  - c. *"This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior."*
2. We know who this prophecy is about:
  - a. Jesus that little Baby lying in the manger,
  - b. Jesus that Baby visited by the Magi,
  - c. Jesus that little child surrounded by shepherds,
  - d. Jesus that Christmas child over whom the angels sing.
  - e. Jesus with the golden sash, pure white hair, eyes blazing like fire, his voice like rushing waters, with a double edged sword coming from his mouth – This is how John of Patmos saw him in the Book of Revelation, and we discussed at last week's service.
3. Discontinuity in our minds about these two images of Jesus...But are the same person.

## Advent is about waiting and anticipation.

Christmas and Second Coming

Advent = Coming

## Waiting for Christmas

What we are anticipating is the celebration of something that happened 2000 years ago.

Anticipation – Decorating, when young, bittersweet older. TV specials – Rudolf. We knew the dialogue almost by heart.

Fudge. Angel Hair. Sitting on the couch anticipating an avalanche of presents.

Countdown

Music

Never a word about the second coming

## Waiting for Jesus to Come again.

We do not emphasize so much. But is the time we should be anticipating.

6<sup>th</sup> Century – beginning of Advent

Heaven come to earth

Jesus coming again.

“Christ has Come, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.”

## How do we know when?

Second Reading from Luke: Signs

Sun, moon and stars.

People faint from terror

Parable of the Fig Tree and other trees

Wars and rumors of wars.

Earthquakes

Stormy seas / Disease / Death / Destruction

### Signs are always with us.

#### Historical Examples

People thought all of these were the end times.

Fall of Roman Empire/Etna - Pompei

Black Plague (1/3) – 100 yrs war – Medieval times

1600s - Thirty Years War/Little Ice Age

Slavery and the Civil War/Northern Lights Fredericksburg

World War I/ Spanish Flu

#### Current Wars

We have been getting the warning signs since the resurrection.

### Eschatological Constant

Eschatology – that funny sounding word.

Latinized Greek for “last”, “furthest”, “uttermost”, “extreme”.

End of time / End of History

“ology” = study of...

Infinite geometric series - Always approaching the singularity and always adding up to 1.

Already in the Kingdom/Not yet come to its full fruition.

I call it the “eschatological constant” because it seems to be a constant force throughout our history, persisting in spite of everything that happens.

All we need is a little shove to push us over.

### Conclusion

So we hear about all the expected calamities that will come in the end times. And I think this makes people dread what we might call judgment day. We would rather think about that little baby Jesus, (and we will do that in the coming weeks) But since we live in history great calamities are happening all the time, have been happening for two-thousand years. What the second coming signals, after an intensive time, is an ultimate end to these upheavals and the final coming of God's kingdom into our world.

The Advent season was originally established to build anticipation for this return of Jesus. At Christmas we celebrate the first coming. During the season of advent we should recall the childlike wonder with which we anticipated Christmas in our youth. We should apply that same wonder, that same excitement to anticipating the return of Christ who has done so much for us in giving us the gift of grace. He will be bringing with him a new world and a new life for us. You know, the Bible does not speak so much about us going to heaven, but heaven coming down to us, so that this world will finally become all it was meant to be when God created it so long ago. During this time of anticipation, Advent, think about – Baby Jesus and think about the Jesus of the second coming. They are one and the same person bringing with him Compassion, Love, and Justice.

Please bow your heads and pray with me...

Heavenly God, you sent your Son to walk among us that we might benefit from your love. Lord, it always seems as though it is you coming to us, bringing us love, hope, and joy. Lord we thank you for the relationship you have with us, and

we resolve to look back upon the birth of Jesus as the greatest gift ever given to humanity. We look forward to the return of this gift in the physical form. Help us to understand what it means to us in the present and to the world in the future.

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