

“Your Redemption Draws Near”

Luke 21:25-36

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As regards the first instance of Jesus’ Advent, at the time soon following their fall from the perfection in which they were first created, Adam and Eve had received a divine pledge. They waited – in eager expectation – for the promised Savior their whole lives long. They passed that comforting Word on to later generations. The Old Testament seers – sent by God, to His Chosen, as His spokesmen –further expounded, by inspiration of the Spirit of Truth, on that first Gospel promise. So as time continued the people of the world, *who were paying any attention whatsoever*, heard that the virgin-born, the “seed of the woman,” the Messiah, was coming from the lineage of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, and then from the house and family of the Shepherd King, David. So, with each bit of information the pool from which the Christ would arise became narrower, more focused, even more specific. God’s design is that no one would miss the significance of the prophecy or of its fulfillment.

So it was written — so it was announced that the Messiah would arrive among us, born in the sleepy unsuspecting village of Bethlehem. The prophets “*hath foretold it*” that God Himself, as the “Angel of His presence,” would save this sinful world. Wise men would seek Him. That an appointed time would come and the Shepherd would be given over as sacrifice and would “bless the [whole] world.” He would be bound, “pierced, hands and feet,” and “by His strips we [sinners, would be] healed.”

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take note and our hearts ought not to be burdened by the moral lectures that rattle around in our hearts and minds as this world and the very powers of the heavens are stirred and shaken. Still, as we experience the delay of Jesus' return we get overly and overtly comfortable and familiar with this world. Our bellies are so full that we don't feel the need to be fully dependent on the Lord. We are dazed and dazzled by the siren song of the world and its many temptations that we don't have to be hooked on drugs or alcohol to end up with a skewed world view and damaged mental capacity. We might even use the pursuits of power, fame, and riches to cloud the drearier side of life. How is that not like the alcoholic who drowns his sorrows in a bath of beer and cocktails? How the addict's lines of cocaine blur the lines of reality?

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As we await Jesus' second coming, with eager excitement and expectation, it is always good to meditate on His first Advent. God, indeed, kept His promise in the birth of His Son of the Virgin Mary. God kept His promise with the life of dedicated righteousness and sacrifice that His Son lived in our behalf. God kept His promise in turning the crucifixion into the greatest **divine** act of rescue the world has ever seen. God kept His promise in not leaving His Son decaying in a Judean grave, but "raised [Him] for our justification," as our personal pardon from sin, as the guarantee of our own resurrection someday.

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“Your Redemption Draws Near”

Luke 21:25-36

If not clear, but confusing instead, signs can actually lead one astray. Signs by their very nature are not long and drawn out explanations. Signs replace the long-winded narrative you'd otherwise get from that *ancient guy "in the know"* who stands on the street corner just waiting for his opportunity to tell you how many blocks west you need to travel, and at which stop sign you will turn right, and by whose house, *that no longer exists*, another landmark can be found to verify that you are on the correct trail that leads to your final objective. Signs are perfectly suited for their purpose: to get you on your way, and they are just the right bit of information for our “sound-bite only” minute-long attention spans. Nevertheless, signs are designed to communicate and to be clear and quick about it. Signs are there when there isn't much time for deliberation and decision making.

It does help, however, to know something of your need and final destination. For instance, I-74 splits west of Peoria and I-474 takes **us** to our home. The sign at the point of the split announces that via this exit you will end up in Indianapolis, if you drive far enough. You have to know (*or your GPS better be certain of*) some general geography and of your goal, because the signs could be misinterpreted by the casual tourist. Know your signs and your destination!

St. Luke would say the same about our pilgrimage and the coming of Christ! Quoting Jesus, we are instructed to be familiar enough with the

precursors to His coming... and return, as well as with the prophetic Word that spoke of it... so that we are not caught unawares... so that the “Day of the Lord” would not come upon us suddenly and we are found unprepared, inattentive, complacent, and otherwise engaged in the passions of the flesh. Trapped by such a snare of spiritual apathy will only catch us for the devil and hell.

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