

People of God, last week I spoke to you concerning the meaning of Advent, and how the double theme of Christ's first coming and second coming are depicted for us. The First two weeks are about preparing for Christ's second coming, and the last two weeks are about preparing for his first coming, in the ministry of John the Baptist.

In our first week we saw how the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled when Jesus rode into Jerusalem in the Triumphal Entry. *Behold, your King is coming to you, humble and lowly, riding on a donkey to carry away the burden of your sins.* Here we are taught that it is the kindness and tenderness and mercy of God which leads us to repentance.

On this second week of Advent we see another aspect to the coming of the Lord on that great day. But we do not see the Lord humble and lowly. We do not see gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Instead we see a terrifying vision of the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, the Almighty Jesus Christ who comes to fight against and destroy all his and our enemies.

The Prophet Malachi looks to that Day and says, the *Day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evil doers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze.*

St. Paul picks up this same imagery in 2 Thessalonians 1, saying:

"God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven with His mighty Angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the

glory of His might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at by among all who have believed...”

When the Lord Jesus comes on that day, he is coming to destroy every single one of his enemies, especially those who afflict the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His coming will be like a Sunrise. But a Sunrise of a Nuclear blast. When Christ is revealed in His radiant holiness and righteousness and glory, he will burn away that last remnants of sin that still stain the world.

On the one hand, this will renew us and make us like young calves that kick and pounce and dance out of the stall. He will transform us into His glorious image, and renew us in the strength of eternal vigor of youth. And so we say Come, Lord Jesus.

But on the other hand, we will accompany Jesus in that renewed state of eternal youth and vigor and strength in the final healing of the world, and we will tread down the wicked. For the very same Sun of Righteousness which rises with Healing in his wings for us, will also totally burn up his enemies and turn them into ashes. As Malachi says, *And you shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.*

The Apostle Peter uses similar language to describe that day, saying – *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, (meaning it will come quickly and unexpectedly) and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up”* (or revealed).

When the Lord Jesus comes on that day, He will come in blazing flames of fire, transforming the whole world and everyone in it,

revealing it all for what is truly is. Either it is truly of the substance of Christ, and it will remain, and be rejuvenated in eternal youth, or it will be revealed to be nothing more than ash, that will be blown away.

Another interesting component about that great and terrible day is how it will sound. Peter says the Heavens will pass away with a Roar. Paul says in 1 Thes. 4 that when Christ comes he will *descend from Heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.*

Roar. Cry. Voice. Sound. – all these words are used to communicate something to us – that the fiery and flaming presence of Christ on that day is the final revelation of the transforming power of the Word. This is why Jesus says that *Heaven and Earth will pass away, but His word will never pass away.*

The manifestation of the Glory of God, as revealed many times in History, and in the Scriptures, is always accompanied by Fire and Light, and Wind and Spirit, along with the Thundering of the Word. Consider Genesis 1. *In the beginning God created the Heaven and Earth. And the Earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light.*

Here we see that presence of the Ruach, the Spirit Wind of God along with the Word of God spoken over the creation, was the first manifestation of the Presence of God, in the world. We call that a Theophany. When God's glorious presence is revealed and manifested in the world, it is a Theophany.

The Lord appeared again in glory when he walked in the Garden “during the cool of the day” after Adam and Eve sinned. But the “Cool of the day” is a horrible translation. It should be, when he walked in the ‘wind’ of the day – for it is actually the same word as Spirit in Gen. 1:2 – Ruach – when the Spirit Wind of God hovered over the face of the Deep speaking Light. This sane Glorious Theophany of God’s glory of Wind and Light and Word showed up in judgment on that day when Adam and Eve sinned. This is why they hid themselves.

This same manifestation of God is revealed for us in the Pillar of Cloud by Day and Fire by Night when God lead Israel through the Red Sea and through the Wilderness. The Glory Cloud of God shows up again on the Top of Mt. Sinai, in Ex. 19, when we see the Glory of God appeared again in *thunder and lightening and in a thick cloud with very loud trumpet blasts so that the people trembled. And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.*

This is also the same manifestation of God’s glory revealed to Elijah on the Mountain, when the Lord passed by in the wind, an earthquake, and fire, but finally in His word.

And again to the Prophet Ezekiel who saw the glory of the Lord when a stormy wind and great cloud, with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually and in the midst of it was a fire.

And mystery of mysteries, and glory of glories, we see Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory,

glory as of the only begotten of the Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. Now the Lord Jesus cloaked and his glory behind the veil of human flesh while on earth, but he did reveal it one time to his disciples, and that was on the mount of Transfiguration.

But now that the Lord Jesus has died, and has been resurrected, he is now also glorified. He now exists in this glorious and radiant form even now, as a Man. He is the God-Man, but a Man none the less. And it is this God-Man who is the incarnated Glory of God, that the Apostle John saw in Rev. 1 where he saw one like a Son of Man, clothed in a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. *The hairs of his head were white, like wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice, his voice was like the roar of many waters.*

People of God, it was this fiery, glorious, roaring, and thunderous Word which spoke the world into existence, who also makes us New Creations in Christ. As Paul says, “*For the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’ has shone into our heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” And it is He who is going to come back in power and great glory to transform the world with His fiery, glorious, roaring and thundering word on that last great day. And so we say, Come, Lord Jesus.

But we must understand that we are still in desperate need to prepare for that day. And how do we prepare for that day? By the Word of God. This same glorious Lord Jesus who will transform the world from into glory with His word, is even now transforming us from one degree of glory to another, as we

behold his glory of the in the pages of the Written Word of God, the Holy Scriptures.

And through the Written Word of God, our Lord Christ, by the power of the Spirit, imparts his light and glory upon us and is even now transforming us from one degree of glory to the next. For now we see him in the Scriptures, as in a glass darkly, in part - but on that day we will see him face to face, and we will be finally transformed to be just like him, because we will see him as He is. Bu this transformation takes place even now.

As Paul states in 2 Cor, 3 – *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

This is why the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent is so important:

Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scripture to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of your holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Glory of Christ that we find in the Scriptures transforms us from one degree of glory to another precisely in this way – through teaching us how to be patient in tribulation, through giving us the comforting promises of God, and by encouraging us to embrace and hold fast to the blessed hope of everlasting life.

You do not need to be a great theologian to be transformed by the word of God. It is your daily bread. It helps you to grow from strength to strength, grace to grace, glory to glory. Thus, what you

read today is meant to provide you what you need to today to keep on believing in Jesus, being comforted in your affliction.

No matter how hard it gets. No matter what your supposed friends say against you. No matter how bad your enemies attack you. No matter how bad you messed up. No matter what the world, the flesh, and devil throw at you, no matter how hard your enemies attack you and falsely accuse you, or even accurately accuse you, the one thing that is more transformational than perhaps anything else, is persevering through adversity. If the Scriptures teach us anything, it is that he who endures to the end will be saved. And the enemies of God will get what is coming to them. So don't ever, ever give up. Hold on to Jesus. Hold on to the Lord. And believe his promises, take comfort in His word, and wait for the Lord to deliver you.

Psalm 37 says:

Do not fret because of evildoers,

Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.

²*For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,*

And wither as the green herb.

³*Trust in the LORD, and do good;*

Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

⁴*Delight yourself also in the LORD,*

And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

⁵*Commit your way to the LORD,*

Trust also in Him,

And He shall bring it to pass.

⁶*He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,*

And your justice as the noonday.

⁷Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

⁸Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—it only causes harm.

⁹For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.

¹⁰For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more.

¹¹But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The Christian faith is not an easy life lived. It is filled with many hardships, and enemies, near and far. The Lord Jesus shows us that. But we must be willing to embrace all the suffering that comes our way, holding on to Jesus and trusting in him, that, just as he was delivered from the dead by His Father, so too will the Father deliver you from your mini death like experiences, and bring you into a new phase of resurrection glory. This is how the Word becomes powerful and transformational for you now, in anticipation for that last day.

So then let us give attention to the words of the Lord Jesus which do not pass away. And Let us, through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures be strengthened in our hope by the Holy Spirit, and watch diligently for Jesus' coming. For only in this way will we escape all these things that come to pass, and stand before the Son of Man in glory. Amen.