

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Old Orchard Church

Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2011 — 10:15-11:50 a.m.

**“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”
and “every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him”;
and all peoples on earth
“will mourn because of him.”
So shall it be! Amen.**

Celebrating the Three Comings of Jesus Christ

His Third Coming: In the Judgment

There are three comings of our Lord:

The first in the flesh.
The second in the soul.
The third in the judgment.

The first coming was humble and hidden;
The second is mysterious and full of love.
The third will be majestic and terrible.

In his first, a lamb;
In his third, a lion;
In the one between the two,
The tenderest of friends.

Peter of Blois, France, 12th century



Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 11:1-9
Gospel Reading: Revelation 20:11-21:4

Sermon

“An Ordinary Tradesman in the Hand of God”

Matthew 1:18-25; 2:19-33

Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching



We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

What's Coming—Certainly

When the Son of Man shall appear, and shall descend from heaven upon the earth, the powers of heaven shall be troubled. . . . Fire shall burn before Him. . . . Mighty tempests will rise around Him, and dreadful earthquakes and lightnings such as have never before been seen, nor will be, until that day. . . .

We, too, my brothers, in what state shall we be then? What fear and dread shall fall upon us? Recall to mind. . . the Israelites in the desert, and how they were unable to endure the dark and obscurity, the sound of trumpets, and the voice of the Lord speaking from the midst of the flames (Exodus 20). . . .

But what shall we do, I ask you, when God will come down in anger, and dread wrath, and sit on the Throne of His Glory, and summon to Him all the earth, **from the rising of the sun to its going down** (Psalm 113:3), and all the ends of the earth, so that He may judge His people [i.e., everyone, everywhere] and render to each according to his works? Oh, Woe! Woe! What kind of people shall we be then? In what state of mind shall we be when. . . delivered to that dread tribunal? Woe! Woe! Woe is me! Where now is the pride of the flesh? Where now is vain and useless beauty? Where, all human delight? Where then, shameless and impudent boldness? Where the delight of sin, sordid and unclean? . . . Where then will they be who worship [the pagan goddess, Cybele] with drum and wine and dance, but the works of the Lord they have not considered? What then of those who have passed their lives in apathy and disorder? Where then will be the enticements of pleasure? All these things shall have passed away, and like a little cloud shall have been dissolved.

Where then shall be the inordinate love of wealth, the desire of earthly possessions, from which rises up hardness of heart? Where the monstrous pride that disposes all things, and thinks to itself that it alone exists? Where now the vain and fleeting success and glory of men? Where then human power? Where now is the Tyrant? Where the King? Where the Prince? Where the Leader? Where the Magistrate? Where are they who reveled in luxury, who glorified in the multitude of their riches, and despised God? In that moment, look up; they shall be struck dumb, they shall be utterly confused and shaken. **Fear will seize them; their pains as of a woman in labor** (Hosea 13:13). *With a vehement wind thou shalt break them in pieces.*

Where then will be the wisdom of the wise? Where all their vain cleverness? Woe! Woe! They are terrified; **and they were troubled and reeled like a drunken man; and all their wisdom was swallowed up** (Psalm 107:27). Where now the learned? Where the scribe? Where the recruiting officer of this foolish world?

But with what joy shall we be filled, if we are directed to the right hand of the King? What must we be like when the Just embrace us there? What manner of people must we then be? Of what kind shall be that unspeakable delight which we are to receive, when the king shall with joyfulness say to those who will be on His right hand: **Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world** (Matthew 25:34).

—Ephraem Syrus (c. 306-373 A.D.)