



Table Talk

The First Sunday in Advent A

December 01, 2019

“Therefore, you also must be ready...” Vs. 44



Prophesying the end of the world seems much beloved by both ancient and modern prophets. One list I consulted has 103 end-of-the-world scenarios prophesied in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries alone. Even the Old and New Testaments of our Christian Bible contain end time prophecies. Usually they prophesy a day known as “the coming of the Son of Man,” “the Day of the Lord,” or “Judgment Day.” This day marks the time of accountability for everyone. Jesus Christ will be revealed on that day in all his glory. This old creation will pass away and the New Creation will be brought fully into being.

In this passage, Jesus teaches that prophecy is useless regarding the timing of this day. Nobody knows, only the Father (cf. v 36). He also teaches that this day will come in the midst of boring normalcy: eating, drinking, marrying, etc. (vs. 38). Thirdly, Jesus names no features that distinguish the taken from the left behind. Only the Father knows the day and only the Father knows which ones will be taken and which ones will be left behind. This knowledge reserved to the Father is known as God’s election. It

terrifies us. Because of that fear, humans try to peer into this mystery hidden in God. They peer... you peer... all of us peer into that hiddenness searching for some indication of how we might reassure ourselves that we are ready for that day... prepared for the Lord’s coming... and confident that we will be among the chosen.

And by that peering, you and I commit our sin. That peering reveals our lack of faith (Ro. 14:23b) because we do not trust God to elect us... to choose us. That lack of faith finds its remedy in the one place where faith can be had—that is, where the Word of God (Jesus Christ) is preached and the Sacraments are administered. There the Holy Spirit works faith as it pleases God. In that moment when the Holy Spirit delivers faith, your peering into the hiddenness ends, your sin is forgiven, and your election—which God made in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4)—is delivered to you. You have nothing more to fear. All you need to be ready and prepared for the coming of the Son of Man is that you be under the care of a preacher who delivers Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament.

Table Talk: Tell of how you peer into the hiddenness of God.

Pray: Heavenly Father, grant me a preacher to fill my ears with the Word of God. Amen

Written by Rev. Timothy J. Swenson
Dean of Chapel for the Institute of Lutheran Theology

www.ilt.edu • PO Box 833 • Brookings, SD • (605)692-9337



Table Talk

The First Sunday in Advent A

December 01, 2019

“Therefore, you also must be ready...” Vs. 44



Prophesying the end of the world seems much beloved by both ancient and modern prophets. One list I consulted has 103 end-of-the-world scenarios prophesied in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries alone. Even the Old and New Testaments of our Christian Bible contain end time prophecies. Usually they prophesy a day known as “the coming of the Son of Man,” “the Day of the Lord,” or “Judgment Day.” This day marks the time of accountability for everyone. Jesus Christ will be revealed on that day in all his glory. This old creation will pass away and the New Creation will be brought fully into being.

In this passage, Jesus teaches that prophecy is useless regarding the timing of this day. Nobody knows, only the Father (cf. v 36). He also teaches that this day will come in the midst of boring normalcy: eating, drinking, marrying, etc. (vs. 38). Thirdly, Jesus names no features that distinguish the taken from the left behind. Only the Father knows the day and only the Father knows which ones will be taken and which ones will be left behind. This knowledge reserved to the Father is known as God’s election. It

terrifies us. Because of that fear, humans try to peer into this mystery hidden in God. They peer... you peer... all of us peer into that hiddenness searching for some indication of how we might reassure ourselves that we are ready for that day... prepared for the Lord’s coming... and confident that we will be among the chosen.

And by that peering, you and I commit our sin. That peering reveals our lack of faith (Ro. 14:23b) because we do not trust God to elect us... to choose us. That lack of faith finds its remedy in the one place where faith can be had—that is, where the Word of God (Jesus Christ) is preached and the Sacraments are administered. There the Holy Spirit works faith as it pleases God. In that moment when the Holy Spirit delivers faith, your peering into the hiddenness ends, your sin is forgiven, and your election—which God made in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4)—is delivered to you. You have nothing more to fear. All you need to be ready and prepared for the coming of the Son of Man is that you be under the care of a preacher who delivers Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament.

Table Talk: Tell of how you peer into the hiddenness of God.

Pray: Heavenly Father, grant me a preacher to fill my ears with the Word of God. Amen

Written by Rev. Timothy J. Swenson
Dean of Chapel for the Institute of Lutheran Theology

www.ilt.edu • PO Box 833 • Brookings, SD • (605)692-9337





Table Talk

The First Sunday in Advent A

December 01, 2019

Matthew 24:36-44

No One Knows That Day and Hour

36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,

39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.



Table Talk

The First Sunday in Advent A

December 01, 2019

Matthew 24:36-44

No One Knows That Day and Hour

36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,

39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

