



THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

POPULUS ZION

People of Zion

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Roberto E. Rojas, Jr.

Collect of the Day:

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Introit:

Psalm 80:1, 3, 14, 17 (antiphon: Isaiah 62:11b; 30:30, 29) – *Zion's Coming Salvation*

Psalm:

Psalm 50:1-15 (antiphon: v. 15) – *God Himself is Judge*

Old Testament Reading:

Malachi 4:1-6 – *The Great Day of the Lord*

Gradual:

Psalm 50:2-3a, 5 – *Out of Zion*

Epistle:

Romans 15:4-13 – *Christ: The Hope of Jews and Gentiles*

Verse:

Luke 21:26b-27 – *The powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

Luke 21:25-36 ESV

Author and Date:

Luke the Evangelist around AD 55-60. This is Christ's foretelling of the Second Advent of the Son of Man on the Final Day (Matthew 24:1-25:46; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-38).

²⁵ [Jesus said,] **“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves,**

- “Signs” (Greek: *semeia*) – Cosmic events (eclipses, comets) and earthly events (storms, tidal waves) prepare for the ultimate catastrophe; creation itself is torn apart (see Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; 2 Peter 3:10; and Psalm 102).
- “For just as signs and wonders preceded the redemption of the Israelites out [of] Egypt (as these are described in Exodus chapters 7 through 12), so Christ announces in this Gospel that similarly great signs and wonders will proceed the final redemption of His own” (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla* 1:12).

²⁶ **“people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

- “Fainting” (Greek: *apopsychonton*) – The attitude of the world changes from “perplexity” to “fear,” and some will faint/die from it.

²⁷ **“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.**

- The cloud indicates the glory that is associated with God (Exodus 40:34; Acts 1:9).
- “Son of Man” – See Daniel 7:13-14, and Luke 9:26; 11:30; 12:8, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8

²⁸ **“Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”**

- “Redemption (Greek: *apolutrosis*) – comes (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla* 1:12) from the Hebrew word *ga'al*, “to ransom, deliver, buy back (Ruth 2:20), and from the Hebrew word *padah*, “to ransom,” used especially by Moses for the ransoming of the firstborn from sacrifice (see Exodus 13:13). The Lord redeemed Israel by rescuing

them from slavery. In the NT, “redeem” and “ransom” describe Jesus’ work (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). The Christian will be redeemed and released from any fear, or damnation. Redemption is deliverance from all forces of sin and evil.

- “Also, just as the Israelites were not terrified by those same signs, because they knew that immediately thereupon would follow their rescue [redemption]. So also Christ states in this Gospel lesson, when the godly will see the signs prior to the end of the world, they should lift up their heads for their redemption is drawing near....the Lord now comforts His believers so that they should not be too terrified at these signs” (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla* 1:15, 18).
- “He means that we should prepare ourselves for His coming, as if to say, ‘O poor flock, you have been forced to suffer much in this world for My sake. Now look at Him in whom you have trusted. Where now are those who persecuted you? Where now is their great glory and pride? Have they not all been put to shame in body and soul? Behold, now your cross and misery are ended, and their eternal damnation and calamity begin. Do not let My power and glory terrify you. It is not against you but for you” (Johann Spangenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, 22).

²⁹ **And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.**

- These trees produce two crops each year. They mark the passing of the seasons. Israel observed two seasons: the wet season (Bul/Heshvan through Ziv/Iyyar, that is, October–May), and the dry season (Sivan through Ethanim/Tishri, that is, May–October). See Mark 13:28.

³⁰ **“As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near.**

- Jesus prepares His disciples to know that redemption is drawing near for them. As the figs mark the beginning of the “dry” season of summer when the wheat and tares are separated, so too, these cosmic events mark the beginning of a new season of Redemption and Judgement.

³¹ **“So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.**

- Jesus teaches the Christian to not only observe these things but to pray for God’s Kingdom to come, as Revelation 21:17 says (see the 2nd Petition of the Lord’s Prayer).

³² **“Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place.**

- “Truly” (Greek: *amen*) – The Greek comes from the Hebrew word “amen” which means “truly, indeed.” This word is used infrequently in Luke.
- “This generation” – This is used 9 times in Luke, and it always refers to an unbelieving portion of humanity.

³³ **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**

- “Will not” (Greek: *ou me*) – It is rendered emphatically negative in the Greek: “will never pass away.”
- “He is not a mere man or angel, neither is He just true, wise, and mighty, but He is the eternal Truth and Wisdom itself and Almighty God. He knows very well what and how He is to speak. He can also powerfully effect and do everything that He says and promises” (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration: VII, 43).

³⁴ **“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.**

- “Beware” (Greek: *prosechete*) – This is Jesus’ final warning to His disciples in Luke.
- “A true and not a false putting to death [mortification] happens through the cross and troubles, by which God exercises us... There is also a necessary, voluntary exercise... These exercises are to be accepted not because they are services that justify, but because they are assumed to control the flesh, should overindulgence overpower us, and make us secure and unconcerned. This results in people indulging and obeying the tendencies of the flesh” (Apology of the Augsburg Confession: XV, 45-47).
- The Christian is prepared with “holy conduct and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11).

³⁵ **“For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth.**

- The judgement of God is inescapable. See Luke 18:8, and the 2nd Article of the Creed: “*He will come to judge both the living and the dead.*”
- See 2 Corinthians 5:10.

³⁶ **“But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”**

- “Stay awake” – A living faith that is active in love (see Matthew 25:1-13 and James 2:14-26).
- “Stand before the Son of Man” – Literally, “To be made to stand,” that is, by grace alone. The Christian will stand unharmed in Christ’s judgement, greeting it with joy.
- Jesus promises to come soon in visible glory to judge all, so He urges us to be ready through repentance (see the 6th and 7th Petition of the Lord’s Prayer).

