

Why do we still have warning of the end times today?

Isn't this Advent?

Aren't we supposed to begin a preparation?

Yes, we do enter into a new season

A season of hope and promise

A promise that Jeremiah wrote about in our first reading

Jeremiah had a tough assignment

Today's reading follows a warning

He had just told the Israelite nation some very bad news

God's judgment would come upon the Temple

The core of their identity as God's chosen people

This would be the first time the Temple would be destroyed

And the people were having a hard time

Because if they believed Jeremiah

It meant that God was displeased with them

Not an easy pill for them to swallow

Not an easy pill for us today

But there is good news as well

The Lord makes them a promise

I will raise up a just shoot

From the house of David

Israel will once again dwell in security

We know this was God's word because it came to be

The Temple was destroyed

The Israelite nation was exiled from the Promised Land

And the Messiah was born

Jesus Christ, from the house of David

This prophecy has been fulfilled partially

It remains to be fulfilled in its entirety when Jesus returns

It will be partially fulfilled in our hearts this Christmas

And every Christmas until Christ returns

This is what we wait for

This is what we prepare for

We know it will be fulfilled

We trust in the one who made the promise

While we do not know the exact day Jesus will return

We do know that the day will come

Either for the world as a whole

Or for each one of us individually

St. Paul tells us to be prepared

We prepare ourselves by living holy lives

By increasing in our love for each other

It is so easy to get caught up in the warnings

To be worried about the end of the Mayan calendar
To see signs in the sky or nature or political manifestations as the end
We can get so caught up in these things concerning tomorrow
We fail to prepare our hearts today

This is what Christ is warning us about

Beware your hearts do not become drowsy

From carousing and drunkenness

And the daily anxieties of daily life

That that day may catch you off guard

Jesus warns us of the day that is coming

He is warning the Jewish people the Old Covenant is coming to an end

He is the New Covenant

The one thing most central to the old will be destroyed

The Temple will be destroyed

It helps for us to realize what this meant for them

The Temple was everything

It represented their religious identity

It was their family heritage

It was even a representation of the cosmos

Where God dwells

For the Temple is where God dwells with his people

So for the Temple to be destroyed

Was an end to so much more than just a building

It was an end to the way of life they enjoyed

We know it signified an end to the Old Covenant

Christ is the New Temple

The New Covenant

The destruction of the Temple points forward

To the second coming of Christ

We are called to prepare for this

Not by stocking up on food and guns

But by preparing our hearts

He calls us to be vigilant so we have the strength to escape

So we will be able to stand before the Son of Man

When we come before him face to face

We face a serious challenge in our world today

It is a spirit of tepidity

An assimilation of the culture into our lives

Trusting in material possessions

Trusting in society

Hoping in salvation from finite things

Desiring salvation from things we can buy

And wanting them cheap

We have a crisis of faith

We want everything wrapped up like a half hour TV show

We want our faith like a fast food menu

We want to trade it off like a used car

Or always desiring something new and exciting like a new phone

These things are not bad things

But they do not fit into a faith life

They lead us to a false sense of religion

We always want to be entertained

And if our faith or liturgy does not keep us engaged on the external

We fail to engage on the internal

This is why Pope Benedict has called for a *Year of Faith*

So we can re-engage our faith lives

When we begin to grasp what goes on at Mass

We realize it is not about us

It is about what has been given to us

Or rather, who has been given to us

Jesus tells us

Do not become drowsy from carousing

And drunkenness

And anxieties

Excess of pleasure

Living on the surface, over-indulging

Distractions and giving passing things lasting importance

Living for humanly defined success

Power, pleasure, and money

These can be deceptive

And we peruse the traps of carousing, drunkenness and anxieties

In whatever form they take

Jesus is not speaking literally

He is warning us against things that destroy our faith

About things that contain a false joy

About trusting in things of the world

Rather than in preparing for the One that lasts

**The One Person that has overcome everything the world can
throw at him**

The One who has destroyed even death

This is the One we are preparing for

This is the One who is coming into the world

The one who desires to be born into your heart and soul

But we have to prepare

So when he comes

There will be a room ready for him