

“The Days are Coming!!”

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord.” With these words the Lord shakes you up – shakes you away from the task at hand. He makes you to “lift up your head” from whatever is on today’s To-Do List – to look beyond the here and the now – to look at what lies ahead – and even to look at what has already been.

In a few days you’ll turn a page on the calendar and be surprised that it is DECEMBER already!! “The days are coming” – and you think about all the things you need to accomplish – even as you wonder how you got so little done in November.

Today we flip over a page of the Church’s calendar to find out that a new year has begun – that it’s ADVENT already – and that there is so much to get done.

Paraments have been changed – the advent wreath put in place – services scheduled --- and yet, the musicians need service information – we need to know who will be here on Christmas Eve so assignments can be given to the Sunday School students – there are a lot of bulletins to run – and the list goes on.

But more than all that – the very Word of the Lord, the liturgy, the hymns – they are all crying out ---- “Behold, the days are coming!!”

The Season of Advent reminds us that our Savior has already come – and we will celebrate His Birth once again this Christmas. Advent reminds us that our Savior comes to us in these days – that there is peace on earth because the Prince of Peace is present in the midst of us – baptizing, preaching, absolving, feeding our souls – protecting and guiding us in the way that we should go.

But Advent also reminds us that we live in the Last Days – and that our Savior will “come again to judge the living and the dead” – and so we lift up our eyes, expectantly looking for our King who will come for our final deliverance and eternal salvation.

Today, through the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet, the Lord tells us exactly WHAT these days are and WHEN they will occur. “The days are coming ... when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. IN THOSE DAYS AND AT THAT TIME I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David ...”

When you see the righteous Branch spring up – you know that the days are here! We know who this Branch is. We sing about Him in our hymns:

See, the loveliest blooming rose, alleluia!

From the branch of Jesse grows, alleluia!

On this day God gave us, Christ, His Son, to save us; Christ, His Son to save us.

And again:

Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,

Manifested by the star, to the sages from afar,

Branch of royal David's stem, in Thy birth at Bethlehem:

Anthems be to Thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

The days that “ARE coming” HAVE come. The Lord has fulfilled His promise to the house of Israel and the house of Judah by sending His own Son to take on our flesh and be born of the Virgin Mary.

Jeremiah's prophesy, however, was not about one day, about Christmas – but about those DAYS – THESE days in which we live. This is His time. His gracious promise is fulfilled now – “for you.”

What are these days about? The Father sends His Son to “execute justice and righteousness in the land.” Into our midst – into the midst of Adam's descendants, of which “there is no one who is righteous, not even one” – for all have turned away (Rom. 3) --- in the midst of sinners the Branch of David springs up – the Savior comes.

In and of ourselves, there is no good – there is no righteousness. And yet, in the Advent hymn you sang:

For You are the Father's Son, who in flesh the vict'ry won.

By Your mighty pow'r make whole, all our ills of flesh and soul.

We know that we are not victorious over sin – that our flesh and soul are sick. We know that we are not right with God – even as we add to our daily To Do List, things we hope will change all of that.

But no matter how long your list is, or how faithful you are in checking things off your list – in the end we know that we are sinners who have fallen short of the glory of God – that the “wages of sin is death” – that our sin has brought death to our life.

“Behold, the days are coming declares the Lord” – into the stark reality of these days – the Lord fulfills His gracious promise “for you.” The baby born of Mary – the Promised Savior, Jesus – is the righteous Branch who springs forth from David’s line, who comes in these days to save you.

God’s own Son becomes true man “for you.” He fulfills all that you have failed to do. He pays the wages of your sin, and dies your death – and in so doing – He fulfills God’s justice.

It’s true that the wages of sin IS death – BUT the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. God GIFTS to you His Son who has done all things RIGHT “for you” – so that in THESE DAYS and on the LAST DAY – you may lift up your head and declare, “the Lord is MY righteousness.” Jesus is my Savior. He is my salvation.

Soon you will flip the page of the calendar and be reminded of Christmas and all the gifts. May they remind you of the gift of eternal life that is already yours – in these days – in Christ Jesus.

As you consult your To Do Lists – see that the Lord has already scratched off all the things needing to be done in order to be righteous before the Father in heaven – and that even now, you stand before Him, holy and righteous.

As you hear again the gracious promise of the Savior in your ears – as you receive His very Body and Blood, born of Mary – see that the Kingdom of God is here, that Jesus is ruling over your sin and death with His forgiveness, His righteousness, His salvation.

“Behold, the days are coming declares the Lord.” THESE DAYS in which you dwell securely – safe in Jesus your Righteousness – even as you look forward to His return on the Last Day – when He takes you from living in THESE DAYS to your ETERNAL home in heaven. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.