



Dec. 2, 2018 . Lk. 21: 25-28, 34-36 & Jer. 33:14-16

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[More Fr. Beck](#) (With permission)

Stone, Naomi. [Midnight Ride to Freedom](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Lighting Advent Candles](#)

[https://newmelleray.org/Homily\\_Library](https://newmelleray.org/Homily_Library)

#### ENTERING THE SCENE:

[Fr. Rolheiser](#) reminds us that: “To light a candle is an act of hope. In the days of apartheid in South Africa, Christians there used to light candles and place them in windows as a sign to themselves and to others that they believed that some day this injustice would end. A candle burning in a window was a sign of hope and a political statement. The government didn’t miss the message. It passed a law making it illegal to place a lit candle in a window, the offense being equal to owning a firearm, both considered equally dangerous. This eventually became a joke among the kids: “Our government is afraid of lit candles!”

They had reason to be! Lit candles, more than firearms, overthrew apartheid. Hope, not guns, is what ultimately transforms things. To light a candle as an act of hope is to say to yourself and to others that, despite anything that might be happening in the world, you are still nursing a vision of peace and unity based upon something beyond the present state of things and

this hope is based upon deeper realities and powers than the world admits. To light a candle is to state publicly that you believe that what’s real and what isn’t is ultimately determined by powers and issues that go beyond what’s seen on the evening news. To light a candle is an act of political defiance. It’s also an act of hope.” Where do you/I see the hope these days?

#### LUKE 21:25-36

25 Jesus said to his disciples: “There will be **signs** in the **sun**, the **moon** and the **stars**. On the **earth**, **nations** will be in **anguish**, **distraught** at the **roaring** of the **sea** and the **waves**. 26 Men will die of **fright** in **anticipation** of what is coming upon the **earth**. The **powers** in the **heavens** will be **shaken**. 27 After that, men will see the **Son of Man** coming on a **cloud** with great **power** and **glory**. 28 When these things begin to happen, **stand up straight** and **raise your heads**, for your **ransom** is **near** at hand.

34. "Be on **guard** lest your **spirits** become **bloated** with **indulgence** and **drunkenness** and **worldly** cares. The great day will **suddenly** close in on you like a **trap**. 35. The day I speak of will come upon all who dwell on the face of the **earth**. 36. So be on the **watch**. **Pray constantly** for the **strength** to **escape** whatever is in **prospect**, and to **stand secure** before the **Son of Man**"

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Jesus gives us hope by encouraging us to stand secure in God’s unconditional love. How does this make hope possible for me?

**PRAYER:** Lord, each Advent I reset my spiritual clock, much as I do my time keeping devices with the advent of daylight savings time. This gives me the chance to have the chance to go beneath the surface of my life much as my part of world enters the phase of cold and apparent dormancy of nature. Help me to use this new Advent in ways that nature does as she prepares for the new that will come in the spring. Amen

#### WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

**SIGNS / SEE / LOOK:** All throughout the gospels the people were begging for signs. They wanted proof that Jesus’ source of power was God, not something/one else.

*How could the sun, moon, and stars be the needed signs for the people? What signs would be needed by people today to convince them that Jesus’ power was from God?*

**SUN:** Now the sun becomes a reality that moves from being a god, to a sign of the power of God.

*If you had been one of the disciples, what comfort would Jesus’ predictions have given you? Would it enable you to 'hang in there' better?*

**MOON:** Without sun or moon there would be no day or night. There could be no life. There would be total disorientation.

*Try to imagine the chaos that this condition would generate. What response would be possible to this condition? What would you do?*

**STARS:** The stars in the sky steered ships and marked the passing seasons. It was thought that each person's birth added another star in the sky, and its position influenced your life.

*Imagine the terror in seeing your star falling out of the skies along with all the other stars. What would that mean to you?*

**EARTH:** Many today feel an unrest that suggests that the end of the world is about to happen.

*How do you react to the things that are going on in the world today? Do Jesus' words give you a sense of assurance or dread? Do prophecies of end times and books about being left behind make you uneasy?*

**NATIONS:** This was the time of clans or tribes. The concept of nations was a relatively new idea in human history.

*Does the idea of nations passing away frighten or excite you? Why?*

**ANGUISH:** Anguish arises when a person sees the pain that the new situation causes and senses an inability to stop or intervene in the process.

*Can this kind of suffering with the people/situation be a source of good? How?*

**DISTRAUGHT:** To be distraught is to be taken up out of ourselves in pain and suffering.

*Can this kind of suffering be a source of good? How?*

**ROARING:** A roaring sound usually means we are in the presence of something powerful and potentially dangerous.

*What experiences of something roaring have you had? What feelings come as you remember that sound?*



**WAVES:** people saw the sea in Jesus' time as the great and dangerous unknown. It had a power that only God could tame. When Jesus calmed the sea, it was one of the signs that Jesus' power did come from God.

*If you were one of the disciples, do you think you could have understood what he was saying at the time?*

**FRIGHT:** To be frightened is to be alerted that some mortal danger is present. It can keep us alert or paralyze us.

*Which response does Jesus hope for in telling his disciples ahead of time what is coming?*

**ANTICIPATION:** Anticipation can be dreadful or exciting, or sometimes both. A woman is dreading the onset of labor pains, but eagerly awaiting the birth of the child at the same time.

*Do you think that this is the sort of thing Jesus is trying to set up by letting the disciples in on the coming events?*

**PASS AWAY:** To pass away is to cease to exist.

*Do you have a confidence that you will never cease to exist?*

**POWERS:** In all these events there will no longer be any question of who is God and who God's beloved is.

*How has Jesus given you the ability to trust God's process? Compare the disciple's responses before and after the Pentecost event. Are you before your Pentecost or after it?*

**SHAKEN:** To shake is to move rapidly back and forth or up and down. That which is not flexible often crumbles.

*Would this advance information enable the disciples to avoid crumbling when the shaking happens? What in your faith life is vulnerable to being shaken? Can studying scripture create a flexibility that can enable you to move with the changes in your life?*

**SON OF MAN:** Jesus totally identifies with our humanity. He chose to accept our human condition, so he could really be with us.

*Given the fact that the disciples were trying to prepare themselves for losing Jesus, would his coming as the Son of Man be a source of reassurance and comfort for them?*

**RAISE:** Jesus tells us to stand up and raise our heads like people who are confident that the process is unfolding as it should.

*How does studying the Word enable you to also stand up and raise your head?*

**HEADS:** Our heads are traditionally where our thinking resides. Jesus added our minds to the great commandment of loving God with all our hearts, souls, and strength. Now he tells the disciples to bring their heads erect, ready to face the God that loves them.

*Why do you think he asked them to raise their heads instead of bow them? What feeling does this request engender in you?*

**RANSOM:** To pay a ransom is to redeem someone or something from a captor.  
*In what ways are the disciples captive? How can the predicting the event free them?*

**NEAR:** The time of Jesus was a time of closeness for humanity and God.  
*What gives you that feeling of closeness to God? Does the God of Jesus draw nearer to you when you reflect on the Word*

**GUARD:** To guard is to protect something or someone.  
*What is Jesus asking the disciples to guard?*

**SPIRIT:** A person's spirit is often seen as the center of their being.  
*How can you guard the center of your being?*

**BLOATED:** To be bloated is to be dangerously overextended.  
*What has the potential to overextend you today and tempt you to let down your guard?*

**INDULGENCE:** The people in Luke's time were beginning to realize that Jesus' return would not probably come in their personal lifetime. A sense of complacency started to take over, tempting them to let down their guard.  
*Do you have an active sense of confident alertness, or have some 'indulgences' crept into your faith life?*

**DRUNKENNESS:** Drunkenness comes in many forms and provides an escape from reality for at least a little while.  
*What escapist behaviors are popular in society today? What is your favorite escapist behavior?*

**WORLDLY:** Things that can only exist in space and time are things that are worldly.  
*What about you are beyond space and time? Do you guard it carefully?*

**SUDDENLY:** The word suddenly suggests surprise. It catches us 'off guard'.  
*How do you act or react to something that comes up suddenly? What makes it possible for you to move with the situation in a creative rather than defensive way?*

**TRAP:** A trap catches you unaware and imprisons you.  
*How can you avoid being entrapped?*

**WATCH:** To watch is to be alert and implies that we have a plan to meet the situation.  
*How can this reading help you watch? How can this reading help you plan?*

**PRAY:** To pray is to go to God. It is to have an awareness that you are living in God.  
*Jesus tells the disciples to pray constantly. He implies that this will ground them in what strength they need to endure this coming challenge. How can someone pray constantly?*

**CONSTANTLY:** To be constant is to be always there and attentive. Jesus is presented in Luke's gospel as praying constantly.  
*How do you develop the ability to be constant in something?*

**STRENGTH:** Strength means power: power to move, resist, persuade, enforce, or endure.  
*In what ways does God's love empower you? What strengths do you have to move, resist, persuade, enforce, or endure? How do you tap into the power of God for your strength?*

**ESCAPE:** To escape is to be freed from something or avoid the trap.  
*How can studying this scripture help you escape the trap of fear and free you to enter into the anticipation of Jesus' coming again?*

**PROSPECT:** A prospect is something that is could come in the future.  
*Many things are in a state of rapid change these days. Do you see this as a time of breakdown or breakthrough?*

**STAND SECURE:** To stand secure is to be quietly firm in the face of a possible threat.  
*How does Jesus help you stand secure by giving you this advance warning?*

**PARALLEL READINGS:** Lk. 21: 25ff // Mt. 24: 29f; Mk. 13:24ff; Is. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 4:15; Lk. 21:27 // Dan. 7:13; Lk. 21:29-33 // Mt. 24:32-35; Mk. 13:28-31; Lk. 21: 32 // Lk. 9:27; Mt. 16:28; Lk. 21:34 // 1 /Thess. 5:3;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** Jer. 33: 14-16; [Ps. 25: 4-14](#); 1 Thess. 3: 12-4: 2; Lk. 21: 25-28- 34-36;

Revised Common Lectionary: Jer. 33: 14-16; [Ps. 25: 1-10](#); 1 Thess. 3: 9-13; Lk. 21: 25-36;

### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:**

A cardinal delivered an urgent message to Pope Francis, saying, "Holy Father, the Second Coming of Christ is imminent. What should we do?" Pope Francis replied, "Look busy."

The decision to persevere prepares us for the answer to the Advent question: Why did it take the Incarnation to save us? It is because in order to persevere we needed both a reason and a model for this change. Fr. Jonah Wharff

Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent...If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time. - Edward Hays

Advent is the perfect time to clear and prepare the Way. Advent is a winter training camp for those who desire peace. By reflection and prayer, by reading and meditation, we can make our hearts a place where a blessing of peace would desire to abide and where the birth of the Prince of Peace might take place.- Edward Hays

In a world so full of social and political turmoil and immense human suffering, people of faith will often be ridiculed because of their so-called ineffectiveness. Many will say: "If you believe that there is a loving God, let your God do something about this mess!" Some will simply declare religion irrelevant, while others will consider it an obstacle to the creation of a new and better world. Jesus often tells his followers that, as he was, they will be persecuted, arrested, tortured, and killed. But he also tells us not to worry but to trust in him at all times. "Make up your minds not to prepare your defense, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict" (Luke 21:14-15). Let's not be afraid of skepticism and cynicism coming our way, but trust that God will give us the strength to hold our ground. Henri Nouwen

By gradually accepting the daring initiative of intimacy with God, the Hebrew people became a true community of faith. It was not so much that God loved Israel more than all the other peoples of the earth, but, somehow, they learned how to hear and trust God's initiatives and could pass the message to the rest of the world. Election is only for the sake of passing the same experience on! Richard Rohr

A prison cell, in which one waits, hopes - and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside, is not a bad picture of Advent" - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### **Eschatology {es-kuh-tahl'-uh-jee}**

Eschatology, a term of Greek derivation meaning literally "discourse about last things," typically refers to the Judeo-Christian doctrine of the coming of the kingdom of God and the transformation or transcendence of history. The distinction between transformation and transcendence reflects the difference between Old Testament messianism, which looked for the coming of the kingdom of God within a historical framework, and New Testament apocalypticism, which expected the total dissolution of the world at the last judgment. The end of history in Western religions, however, is not a cyclical return to a primordial world outside history as it is in the eschatologies of non-Western religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, even the dissolution of history is based in a historical future. The New Testament concept of Parousia ("coming presence") appears to refer to both the present and the continuing SALVATION among believers in Jesus Christ and the literal SECOND COMING OF CHRIST that will bring an evil world to judgment before salvation.

### **Second Coming of Christ**

The Second Coming of Christ refers to the Christian belief in the future return of Christ in glory to judge the living and the dead, an event that will end the present world order. The New Testament never uses the term Second Coming. It refers instead simply to Christ's parousia ("presence" or "arrival"). In Heb. 9:28, however, the hope of Christ's appearing a "second time" is expressed. This hope originated in the Easter experiences of the first disciples, which communicated a sense of the incompleteness of Christ's work and the promise of its future completion. The early Christians expressed these convictions by identifying the resurrected Christ with the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13) and by combining this text with Ps. 110:1 (as in Mark 14:62). At first the Christian community expected an imminent return of Christ, but it adjusted itself with remarkable ease to the notion of an indefinitely postponed Second Coming. The New Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia

In [The Apocalypse of Peter](#), written in the early second century we find:

1 And when he was seated on the Mount of Olives, his own came to him, and we entreated and implored him severally and besought him, saying to him, "Make known to us what are the signs of your Parousia and of the end of the world, that we may perceive and mark the time of your Parousia and instruct those who come after us, to whom we preach the word of your gospel and whom we install in your Church, in order that they, when they hear it, may take heed) themselves that they mark the time of your coming.' And our Lord answered and said unto s, "Take heed that people deceive you not and that you do not become doubters and serve other gods. Many will come in my name saying 'I am Christ.' Believe them not and draw not near unto them. For the coming of the Son of God will not be manifest, but like the lightning that flashes from the east to the west, so shall I come on the buds of heaven with a great

host in my glory; with my cross going before my face will I come in my glory, shining seven times as bright as the sun will I come in my glory, with all my saints, my angels, when my Father will place a crown upon my head, that I may judge the living and the dead and recompense every one according to his work. Ehrman, Bart. After the New Testament. NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 1998. Page 297.

My deepest vocation is to be a witness to the glimpses of God that I have been allowed to catch. Henri Nouwen

One's destination is never a place, but rather a new way of looking at things. Henry Miller

In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we come to understand that here, in this life, all symphonies remain unfinished. Karl Rahner

"The soul of man," [Photini](#) continued, "came from God. Since God is immortal, the human soul is also immortal. Since this world is temporal, the human soul finds no rest in this world. A person may acquire wealth, glory, power, and other things, but times will come when he will be troubled and worried, because the soul, which is a foreigner in this world, is the main part of man. The closer the hour of departure approaches, the more a person is troubled and grieved, because his soul yearns for something that it did not find in this life. What it yearns for is the Ultimate Good, Immortality, which is God. When man reaches the Ultimate Good -- not physically but spiritually -- then he finds rest, is satisfied, and rejoices, because he attained what he longed for: God."

Karios, an ancient Greek word describes the opportune moment in archery when an arrow that will successfully reach its target is released from the bow, as well as the moment in weaving when the warp of the work opens just enough to successfully introduce the perfect color of thread into the fabric.

Advent for us means acceptance of this totally new beginning. It means a readiness to have eternity and time meet not only in Christ, but in us, in Man, in our life, in our world, in our time. The beginning, therefore, is the end. We must accept the end, before we can begin. Or rather, to be more faithful to the complexity of life, we must accept the end in the beginning both together.

Christ came as the *word* to do for us what our mother tongue does, namely, to shape us in such a way that we can move beyond the fear, darkness, and chaos that prevent us from entering the world of love, thought, and self-expression. 209

Rolheiser, Ronald. Against an Infinite Horizon. NY. Crossroad Pub. 2001

Lk. 21.25–28: The coming of the Son of Man (Mt 24.29–31; Mk 13.24–27). 25–27: Apocalyptic elements drawn from Joel 3.3–4; Isa 24.19 (LXX); Ps 65.8; 46.4; 89.10; Wis 5.22. 25: Isa 13.10; Joel 2.10; Zeph 1.15. 26: Powers of the heavens, either celestial bodies or supernatural beings (see Rom 8.38; Eph 6.12; Col 1.16; Heb 6.4; 1 Pet 3.22). 27: Son of Man, see 5.24n. Cloud, see Dan 7.13; Acts 1.9. 21.29–33: Lesson of the fig tree (Mt 24.32–36; Mk 13.28–32). 32: See 9.27n. 33: Cf. 16.17. 21.34–36: Admonition to alertness (cf. Mt 24.43–51; 25.13; Mk 13.33–37; see also Luke 12.35–48). 34: Drunkenness, see Tob 4.15; Sir 31.30; Rom 13.13; Gal 5.21; 1 Pet 4.3. 36: Son of Man, see 5.24n. 21.25–28. 21.37–38: Jesus' Jerusalem activities. Pg. 144. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

One of the marks of spiritual maturity is the quiet confidence that God is in control - without the need to understand why He does what He does. – Anonymous

### SELECTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: [www.theark1.com](http://www.theark1.com)

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benShea, Noah. Jacob the Baker. NY. Villard Books., 1989. PRAYER IS A PATH WHERE THERE IS NONE: Page 36.

Grana, Janice, Ed. Images. Winona, MN. St. Mary's College Press. 1976.

A REALITY OF THE FUTURE: Page 142. JOURNEYING: Page 143. THE JOURNEY: Page 135.

Wells, Abbie Jane. The Gospel According to Abbie Jane Wells. Chicago. Thomas More Press. 1985. YESTERDAY'S PAIN: Page 14.