

**IN NOMINE JESU**

**CHRIST THE KING**

Hear again the Word of the Lord for this last Sunday of the Church Year:

*God has not set all of us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us, that whether we may watch (or) sleep likewise we, together with Him, might live.<sup>1</sup>*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

In the year 1925, during the rise of Facism in Italy, with a world seemingly handing itself over to ever increasing decadence, the Roman Pontiff declared a new feast for the Church Year. The day, had not been held in Christendom as “Christ the King,” until then when Pope Pius XI stated, “by Our Apostolic Authority We institute the Feast of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ to be observed yearly throughout the whole world .... We further ordain that the dedication of mankind to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.... be made annually on that day.” He, in his encyclical, his letter to the Catholic Church, named them, and they are summarized by these four points:

- 1) Christ, as God and Creator, wields supreme power over all things;
- 2) Christ, as Redeemer, purchased us by His precious blood, and “continues to offer himself as a victim for our sins;”
- 3) Christ is Head of the Church;
- 4) God bestowed on Christ all the kingdoms of the earth “In him is the salvation of the individual, in him is the salvation of society.”

The Order of Service for this day, in the Church of Rome, is structured to display the qualities of Christ’s kingdom. For the Pope, that kingdom is visible seen as the

Roman Catholic Church. For Rome, “the rule of faith is indicated by the law of our worship.” For them, the Kingdom of our Lord has four qualities, namely,

- 1) It is supreme – over all princes and governments and peoples;
- 2) It is universal – over all nations and places;
- 3) It is eternal
- 4) It is spiritual.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, “it is a dogma of faith that Jesus Christ was given to man, not only as our Redeemer, but also as a law-giver, to whom obedience is due.” If the hair stood up on the back of your neck on account of some of those points, good. There is great confusion of biblical teaching in this modern feast, its rationale, and its understanding of God’s kingdoms of left and right. (Now you have some insight as to why this day has not been celebrated as “Christ the King Sunday” here for more than a decade now. It is not because a Pope established it, but because it confuses the Lord’s Kingdoms of Right and Left, and God’s Law and Gospel. The Anti-Christ works subtly with the Word, and twists it to his ends, in this case, to turn people toward a Jesus who is Law-giver).

To keep us from error, and to focus us on the true Christ, the True Church now turns to the more ancient readings used for this time of year, this Last Day of the Church Year. We continue where we started, with the Good News of Jesus Christ:

*God has not set all of us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us, that whether we may watch (or) sleep likewise we, together with Him, might live.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> *I Thessalonians* 5:9-10.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.catholicculture.org/>, accessed November 23, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> *I Thessalonians* 5:9-10.

These words were first written to be read before one particular Christian congregation. The Apostle Paul, under the verbal inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote them to comfort a congregation that had undergone, and would continue to undergo, pressures and persecutions for their right confession of Christ Jesus. He promised them that those who were the enemies of Christ, and thus their enemies, would be one day punished by God with everlasting destruction. Yet he wanted them, and now you, to know that God's wrath was reserved for those who continually rejected *salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us*. The man who himself had once persecuted the Church unto death in another part of the world, now offered them promise, peace and comfort in the knowledge that God would see them through all things, for they had participated in His death that they might be eternally saved from the *wrath of God, sin, death and hell by His blood*.<sup>4</sup>

Christ is coming again into this fallen creation as King. That is true. For we who remain in Him by grace through faith, this coming will be one of everlasting joy, peace and communion with the Most High. It is a day that the Church has eagerly awaited, perhaps more so at time when she, and her individual members, are undergoing worldly persecution.

We have entered another such time. The Church faces persecution in our democratic republic as her ability to speak the Lord's truth is constrained. This pressure comes upon us under the guise of well-worn phrases of "political correctness," and

“relativism.” The persecution also comes in the form of immoral laws (those which go against God’s biblically revealed morality) – those statutes, rulings and amendments that permit the killing without fair trial of the pre-born; the marriage of those who practice what God has termed “unclean...shameful...abomination;” the reclassification of sexual sins – among those who would call themselves Church – as not prohibited from scripture.”<sup>5</sup> (Did you note that the five “foolish” virgins were at first found “in the Church,” only to be shut out at the coming of the Bridegroom for their lack of faithfulness)?

When we who desire to cling to the entirety of God’s revealed doctrinally errorless Word see, experience and feel these pressures, we are tempted to see the imminence of the Lord’s coming. We want Him now on the clouds so that we don’t have to experience any longer the trials that are upon us. These emotions and thoughts are nothing new for the believers in Christ under the persecution of the world and the devil. St. Paul writes:

*Concerning the times and the seasons, O brothers, we do not have need to write to you, for you all precisely know that (the) Day of (the) Lord thus comes as (a) thief in (the) night.<sup>6</sup>*

Recall what you have heard here before, even recently, that it is God’s will that all individuals would be saved and come to an intimate saving knowledge of Him. That is why He delays, that some will turn from sin, from persecuting Christ and His Church, and be saved. In His forbearance, in His own counsel, the Father knows the Day and time of His Son’s final, visible, and eternal bodily entrance into His creation. Yet, that

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<sup>4</sup> This is from Dr. Luther’s exhortation to communicants as used in CLC’s order of Divine Service.

<sup>5</sup> Romans 1:24-27; Leviticus 18:22.

<sup>6</sup> I Thessalonians 5:1-2.

Day of deliverance is not to be Christians' ultimate concern. Ours is to live on under the pressures of this life knowing this,

*God has not set all of us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us, that whether we may watch (or) sleep likewise we, together with Him, might live.<sup>7</sup>*

There have been so many days in history, that if the Christians of that time were polled, many would surely have said, "The End is coming, the Lord is near, I expect to see Him on the clouds in my lifetime." Think backwards in time to events that may have led Christians to those conclusions:

- 1) The reported gift of \$50 million dollars to Wycliffe Bible Translators to ensure translation of the Bible into all the languages of the world. Some have held that this will hasten the Lord's coming – as if the prophecy was not fulfilled by the clear words of Scripture almost 2,000 years ago on the Day of Pentecost! Our efforts are to preach the Gospel till Jesus comes, that souls be saved, not that we hasten the Day when no more will be able to be saved, when the door is shut and the Lord says, "I do not know you!" (By all means Wycliffe missionaries should translate the Bible in all languages! But they should do so with God's heart and intent - toward the salvation of souls)!
- 2) The world events that occurred after the Pope declared the Feast of Christ the King. The Holocaust of the Second World War. The fire from the sky that

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<sup>7</sup> I Thessalonians 5:9-10.

incinerated two Japanese cities. Surely some of the ones under the bombs would have felt that the Lord was coming soon.

- 3) The horrors known only to us through written records and photographs of the battles of the Great War, where thousands died in minutes, even those hiding in caves, under the rain of artillery fire. Surely the Lord was coming to deliver the Christians there from that carnage.
- 4) The rivers of blood that flowed in our land on battlefields at Gettysburg, Chickamagua, and so on. Surely the Lord was treading out the grapes of His wrath, flowing forth the end from His winepress!
- 5) The killing of the evangelical confessors in Britain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the murder of the reformer Jan Hus in Czechoslovakia in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the persecutions of those who clamored for the pure Word and right Sacraments under the Inquisition. Certainly they wanted the Lord to come on the clouds and deliver them! And He did not bring His Last Day.
- 6) The declaration of the Faith as illegal, and the horrendous death sentences and executions of the followers of Jesus in the first three “Christian” centuries come to mind. Certainly those who were fed to the beasts in the arena, who were nailed to crosses, mutilated, and so forth expected the imminent return of Christ the King. Yet He did not come.

Are we, you, more special than all the Christian martyrs of old? Is our time more horrendous than those that the Church and her saints have suffered through before?

How arrogant we are at times to think so much of ourselves and our times. If you have thought that our Lord needs to come now because we are suffering so horribly, and have forgotten the blood that flowed for the right confession of Christ and His Good News, then turn and ask the Lord for forgiveness!

Our text tells the Church, you dear ones, again, of the events surrounding the coming of our Lord in power and glory:

*(the) Day of (the) Lord thus comes as (a) thief in (the) night, when they may continue to say, "Peace," and, "Security," then, suddenly, disaster approaches them as the birth pain comes for the pregnant one; and they have definitely not escaped.*<sup>8</sup>

The world will not know the signs of the Lord's coming. It is revealed that they who are lost will actually be comfortable. The Apostle says that they will be saying to one another "Peace," you know, all is well. They will declare "security" among themselves. (Perhaps we should think the Last Day is nearer in times of worldly prosperity – just a thought)? Maybe, if we get the right changes in our world, and our troops come home, wars cease, everyone has quality health care, steady jobs, the family lifestyles that please them, maybe then is when the Lord will come!?! The Apostle warns, and encourages:

*But, all of you, o brothers, be not in darkness that the day seizes all of you as (a) thief; for you all remain sons of light and sons of day; we are not of night nor darkness, therefore then we do not continue to sleep as the others, but let us be watchful and continually sober.*<sup>9</sup>

You have just heard one reason why the hymns of the Church are not arbitrarily selected because they are popular. There was no fiat in choosing our entrance hymn. The Lord's service is given to His people to draw them, you, into His realities, sin and

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<sup>8</sup> I Thessalonians 5:2b-3.

forgiveness, mercy and glory, watching and seeing, waiting and receiving the Lord in His means. In these holy things, the holy people of God are found as He desires us to be, described today in His words of Law and Gospel:

*But we (who are) by day sober, having donned (the) breastplate of faith and sacrificial love, and about the head as (a) helmet (the) hope of salvation; because God has not placed all of us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us, that whether we may watch (or) sleep likewise we together with Him might live.*

*Therefore beseech one another and build each other up into the One, just as you all also (are) doing.<sup>10</sup>*

You who are God's watching ones are kept in Him for the Last Day. He has given you all you need, the defensive weapons to fight the good fight of the faith. Namely, today you have been reminded that the center of your intellect - your head - and the center of your being - your chest - are encircled by the Word to keep you safe unto the Last Day. Faith, Christ's faith which you know and believe to be yours, protects you. His sacrificial love flows from you even as it covers your thoughts. His salvation guards your vital self and covers you to the Day of Salvation. These divine realities are declared that you each may encourage one another in Christ, that you might comfort one another, and remain watchful, even when times bring change for good, and peace and security abound.

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Last Sunday of the Church Year (One-year series)

Isaiah 65:17-25; I Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:1-13

November 23, 2008

*Pastor Michael H. Morehouse*  
**SOLI DEO GLORIA**

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<sup>9</sup> I Thessalonians 5:4-5.

<sup>10</sup> I Thessalonians 5:8-11.

## **TRANSLATION, SECOND DRAFT**

*Concerning the times and the seasons, O brothers, we do not have need to write to you, for you all precisely know that (the) Day of (the) Lord thus comes as (a) thief in (the) night.*

*When they may continue to say, "Peace," and, "Security," then, suddenly, disaster approaches them as the birth pain comes for the pregnant one; and they have definitely not escaped.*

*But, all of you, o brothers, be not in darkness that the day seizes all of you as (a) thief; for you all remain sons of light and sons of day; we are not of night nor darkness, therefore then we do not continue to sleep as the others, but let us be watchful and continually sober.*

*For the sleeping ones sleep by night and the ones continually being drunk are drunk by night.*

*But we (who are) by day sober, having donned (the) breastplate of faith and sacrificial love, and about the head as (a) helmet (the) hope of salvation; because God has not placed all of us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us, that whether we may watch (or) sleep likewise we together with Him might live.*

*Therefore beseech one another and build each other up into the one, just as you all also (are) doing.*

### **I Thessalonians 5:1-11**

Περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται.

ὅταν λέγωσιν, Εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια, τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται ὄλεθρος ὥσπερ ἡ ὕδιν τῇ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν.

ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σκότει, ἵνα ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμᾶς ὡς κλέπτῃς καταλάβῃ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας. οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους· ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν.

οἱ γὰρ καθεύδοντες νυκτὸς καθεύδουσιν καὶ οἱ μεθυσκόμενοι νυκτὸς μεθύουσιν· ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμέρας ὄντες νήφωμεν ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας· ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν.

Διὸ παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους καὶ οἰκοδομεῖτε εἰς τὸν ἕνα, καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε.<sup>11</sup>

NO BOC

No Luther's Works:

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<sup>11</sup>Aland, B., Aland, K., Black, M., Martini, C. M., Metzger, B. M., & Wikgren, A. 1993, c1979. *The Greek New Testament* (4th ed.) . United Bible Societies: Federal Republic of Germany