

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 5, 2020

“But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”
(Matthew 24:36, 44)

I have decided to take a break this weekend from our examination of sin. I would like to pivot into a different topic that has arisen due to the violence we have been able to witness playing out in many parts of the world over the past two months. Today’s topic will be a brief look into our Church’s teaching concerning the Signs of the Second Coming of Christ (*Parousia*). I feel this is necessary due to the number of questions I am receiving and the increasing number of “End Time Prophecies” which have arisen recently. As always, this will only be a brief introduction; not a full class lecture.

In the New Testament, there are certain signs which are tied to the Second Coming of Christ. Classically, there are four signs which have been singled out. **(1) The preaching of the Gospel to the entire world.** *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.”* (Matthew 24:14) **(2) Wars, natural disasters, catastrophes, and persecutions of the faith.** *“You will hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not alarmed, for these things must happen, but it will not yet be the end. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes from place to place. All these are the beginning of the labor pains. Then they will hand you over to persecution, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name. And then many will be led into sin; they will betray and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and deceive many; and because of the increase of evil-doing, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.”* (Matthew 24:6-13) **(3) The conversion of the Jews/Israel.** *“I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not become wise [in] your own estimation: a hardening has come upon Israel in part, until the full number of the Gentiles comes in, and thus all Israel will be saved.”* (Romans 11:25-26) **(4) The appearance of the Anti-Christ.** *“Little children, it is the last hour: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”* (1 John 2:18) *“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world.”* (1 John 4:2-3)

As you can see, these signs are very ambiguous. Of the four, the one most want to focus upon is the rise of the Anti-Christ. However, in the Epistles of Saint John, there is a case to be made that the Anti-Christ could either be a person or a collective group of persons. I believe this ambiguity is purposeful on Saint John’s part so that we are unable to point to a certain historical figure in the past, present, or future. There is one definitive thing we can deduce from these signs. It is the one point which we should concern ourselves with, and that is Conversion.

My friends, our end is coming. It is one of the surest things upon this planet. Throughout our Christian history, many have arisen to predict an end date. Thankfully, every prediction has been completely and utterly wrong. We need not become too concerned in listening to modern “The End of Days” prophets; for our end is guaranteed. The one thing, the most important thing we should concern ourselves with, is being ready when it does come. Yes, we do not know a day or hour, but if we are spiritually prepared to meet Jesus, then does it really matter when it comes?