

You should not be worry and you should! (Mr 13:1-13; Heb 12:26-29)

* Friends, two Sundays ahead separate us from the season of Advent. But because Christ's coming is still ahead we should not worry about many things even if the splendor of this world and the valued things of this world will be consumed by fire (2Pe 3:7); and the rebellious people as well, (Rev 20:9). Considering such messianic expectations with our day's realities, some Christians may increase their fear of God and love of God while the rest are amazed only experiencing God's endless all-embracing love. Occasionally I find that the difference in opinions between the fearful and the amazed take place not only on the point of messianic expectation but it also takes place on the point of Adventive Hymnology. The fearful like to sing, "Arise, O Christian People" but the amazed give their preferences to "Jesus Is Coming Again." Here I introduce you to the one stanza of each hymn accordingly and responsively. After hearing this poetry you may be divided as well on the point of your own preferences. Now listen to the first one: *The humble heart and lowly God raises up on high; Beneath His feet in terror The haughty soul shall lie. The heart sincere and right, That heeds God's invitation And make true preparation; It is the Lord delight.* Here is another one: *Standing before Him at last, Trial and trouble all past, Crowns at His feet we will cast – Jesus is coming again (a-gain!) Coming again, Coming again; May be morning, May be noon, May be evening and may be soon! Coming again, Coming again; O what a wonderful day it will be -- Jesus is coming again.* Friends, ask yourselves, which stanza do you like more? Or, maybe none? Maybe two? Or you don't care. However, the words said in connection with the last days have to be remembered and believed if they came from Jesus' mouth. He said that there will be great tribulations on the earth, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now. Because of that, none would be saved, but for the sake of the humble and lowly, those days would be shortened, (Mat 24:21-22). We acknowledge that God in Christ Jesus is absolute truth and in him is no darkness at all; if he said, that is it; it will be fulfilled, "... behold, I am with you always, to the end of the ages, said Jesus, (Mat 28:20) Friends, we shouldn't be worried about many things because Jesus promised to be with us, but in our turn we should watch ourselves so that in the day of his coming we may not be found naked, (2Co 5:3).

* In fact many of us have been fascinated with apocalyptic prophecy and its interpretations. Whatever I've heard, watched or read from the apocalyptic genre, there was not found an agreement of opinion among

theologians. For example on the point of the end of times there are four major theories: Millennialism, Amillennialism, Postmillennialism and Premillennialism. It is also not clear who is the Beast from the Book of Revelation. Is it a government, system or individual? Or, who is the antichrist? What does he look like? And so forth. I think it pleased God that people received the apocalyptic prophecy wrapped in symbolical visionary for some reasons. That is hard to understand and that is why there is a capital disagreement in opinions. But the problem was solved through the generalization of the apocalyptic prophecy within the framework of the Ecumenical Creeds (Apostle's, Nicene and Athanasian). The Creeds speak clearly on the matter of Christ's returning, resurrection, judgment and the everlasting life. We accept the Creeds as the absolutely reliable doctrinal corpus. The Creeds set aside all peculiarities causing incorrect interpretations. However, the deep knowledge of apocalyptic events given in the Bible could not be limited exceptionally by the Creeds. It is good to know something in detail as well. For example, the knowledge of prophecy from (Mat 24:15,16) helped the church in Jerusalem to escape the judgment, *let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains*, said Jesus, (v.16) and they fled before the Roman legions sieged Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In summary, we may not worry about many interpretations and opinions because the knowledge given in the Creeds is already sufficient for our salvation, but we should watch ourselves in view of the realities we are observing today!

* The Gospel from (Mr 13:1-13), as well as the entire chapter 24 from Matthew, represent the apocalyptic visionary. Here Jesus Christ revealed himself as the Judge and the Teacher. The disciples should not worry about the faithfulness of their Lord; at the same time they should be aware about their readiness to meet the Judge instead of the Teacher. The Christians, especially the latest generation, should be prepared, (Mat 25:1,2). By the way, the time of preparation is never ahead, now is the day of salvation, the last day, (Act 2:17). So we should make the most of the time that God has given us, (Eph 5:16).

* Anticipating the wide specter of calamities in the future, today we are already seeing instability in politics, economics, finance, the global changing of climate, epidemics, wars and so forth. But the Word of God continues to encourage us to not worry about present things and the destructive powers in the future. The time is coming when all the beauties of this world will turn into nothing like it happened in the first century during

the Jewish War. *"Do you see these great buildings?"* said Jesus, *There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down,"* (Mar 13:2). Today archeologists have found no material evidence of Israel's existence in Palestine after the year 70, not even a tombstone with a Jewish inscription. The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius wrote on this account, *"No strangers who had seen Judea of old, and the lovely suburbs of its capital, and now saw this devastations could have restrain his tears and lamentations at the hideous change. For the war had turned all that beauty into a wilderness. And no man who knew this places of old and suddenly saw them again could possibly recognized them."* So keep in mind what the Lord said, he said; it certainly came, and it also will. The disciples of the last days shall not worry about many things, for instance what they have to say to the governors and judges, (Mar 13:11). On top of that the disciples should not worry about this earthly live. The Word of God promises to deliver them from the consuming fire because the Father loves them and they love the Son, (Joh 14:21;Rev 12:11).

* But on account of things that are happening we should be watchful. As it can be seen from (Mr 13:5), Jesus is very aware of the disciple's beliefs regarding his coming because the false prophets and teachers will arise among them; they will be able to perform great signs and wonders in order to amaze the disciples and lead them toward the antichrist, (Mat 24:24). The most harmful teaching about the second Coming of Jesus is already in the air. But Jesus says plainly, don't believe when someone will prophecy to you in my name that Christ's coming occurred secretly, that he abides somewhere in the inner rooms, (Mat 24:26), don't follow them. In fact, the false teachers today say that the Second Coming of Jesus happened in 1914, but his return was in Spirit; they say, his "coming" has already to take place. Some other false teachers say that the second coming of Christ has already occurred when God by hands of Romans punished the Jews in 70 AD. They say that Christ continues to be with the church and there will not be any future coming of Christ or resurrection of the bodies. Therefore the devil wishes to see us careless.

* Friends, be watchful, see, the landscape of history is already marked by the signs of the last days: - the Gospel has been preached to the nations; - the love of money has increased incredibly; - some churches start to practice gay marriage; - now there are much more lovers of pleasure among Christians rather than lovers of God. The awesomeness of Christ has disappeared from the hearts of many believers. "... I'm old enough to

say this when I tell you that I have a great fear for the Evangelical Church 20 years from today if it continues to trivialize God and bring Him down to a manageable person that they can be comfortable with. I tell you that in 20 years there'll be less appreciation or even concern for the matter of sin. I tell you again, as I watch the worship process developed in evangelicalism, and as I see them throwing away the sacred roots of the past, and singing these little ditties that they call songs, I fear that the awesomeness of God is going," (a quote from the sermon "Martin Luther's Favorite Psalm – 130, saying by pastor Donald Sheley). Jesus wishes to see us faithful and prayerful in the day of his coming; since we are gifted to believe Jesus' words and follow his instructions, let us be thankful and worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire, (Heb 12:29).

Beloved, let the Lord preserve us in love and faith now and up to the day when he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Amen.