

Populus Sion
St. Luke 21:25-36
December 6th, 2020
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

They Will See the Son of Man Coming

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who by Thy Son hast revealed to us that Heaven and Earth shall pass away, that our bodies shall rise again, and that we all shall appear before the judgment seat: We beseech Thee, keep us by Thy Holy Spirit in Thy Word; establish us in the true faith, graciously defend us from sin and preserve us in all temptations, that our hearts may not be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, but that we may ever watch and pray and, trusting fully in Thy grace, await with joy the glorious coming of Thy Son, and at last obtain eternal salvation, through Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

When our Lord + Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven on the fortieth day after His resurrection from the dead we are told by the Evangelist St. Luke, the author of today's Gospel, in his Book of the Acts of the Apostles that our Lord + Jesus was received up into Heaven in a cloud. "A cloud received Him out of their sight." The Evangelist St. Luke records for us today the words of our Lord + Jesus about His return on the Last Day. Just as He was taken up into Heaven in a cloud, He will also come again in a cloud with power and great glory.

Our Lord comes to His people often in a cloud. He was present with His people Israel in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night when He led His people out of the slavery of Egypt. Just as He led His people Israel out of the slavery of Egypt in a cloud, He will come again in a cloud on the Last Day to lead us out of the slavery of this world to sin and death. Our Lord was also surrounded by a cloud on the day of His transfiguration when He took Sts. Peter, James and John with Him up on the mountain. There He met with Moses and Elijah and talked about His crucifixion and death, and the day of His resurrection from the dead.

The clouds that overshadow our Lord in both the Old and New Testaments are meant to mask His glory. For us poor, miserable sinners cannot stand in the magnificent presence of our Lord's glory without being destroyed on account of our manifold transgressions. That which is holy cannot exist with that which is unholy. We cannot be in the presence of a holy Lord God on account of our unholiness. So, He masks His glory in a cloud for our benefit. We are able to receive Him because He masks His glory in earthly things. He does this for us poor, miserable sinners so that we may receive Him without worry. Indeed, He comes to us masked in the cloud of the Church. In the Church we receive Him

through His means of grace. We receive Him in His preached Word and administered Sacraments. These are signs and wonders that mask His true glory, but allow us to receive Him, and in receiving Him we receive forgiveness, life and salvation.

But these means which we receive from Him in the cloud of the Church are only a foretaste of the true glory of Him which we will see and feel when He comes on a cloud in all of His power and great glory to call us into our eternal heavenly home. On that Day our Lord will no longer need to mask Himself for us poor, miserable sinners. On that Day He will come to us in all of His power and great glory, and all the angels with Him. He will come in His Body, the Body which He offered up for us as a ransom for our sinfulness. He will come bearing the marks of His crucifixion for us. We will be able to see the wounds in His hands and feet, and see where the spear pierced His side, even as St. Thomas, whose festival is in a couple of weeks, was able to see His wounds and call Him “My Lord” and “My God.”

This is why this Sunday is called, “Populus Sion,” that is, “People of Zion.” It is taken from the first line of the antiphon of the Introit: “Daughter of Zion.” The Prophet Isaiah tells the daughter of Zion—tells us—that our salvation is surely coming. The Lord now, through the cloud of His Bride the Church, His sending out His glorious voice to proclaim that He is coming to us. He wants us to have gladness of heart by preaching into our ears that just as He came into this world and took upon our flesh at His birth in Bethlehem, even so He comes to us today through His means of grace. He shielded His glory from us at His birth when He covered Himself in the cloud of His Body; the flesh that He took upon Himself in order to fulfill the Law on our behalf and suffer our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. He continues to shield His full glory from us when He comes to us in His means of grace. He overshadows Himself in a cloud so that we who are filled with sin may receive Him without fear.

He will come again on the Last Day, but no longer will He shield His power and great glory from us sinners, but His full power and great glory will be revealed. This is an event that fills many people with anxiety and fear. On account of our sinfulness we rightly should fear this Day. Indeed, all unbelievers and revilers of the Lord God and His Word should rightly fear this Day, for it is the Day of their eternal destruction in Hell, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. But we need have no such fear or anxiety. For our Lord + Jesus has already fulfilled the Law of God for us and paid the penalty of our sins on the tree of the holy cross. We who cling to Him and His works and merits have no need to fear this Day.

Indeed, our Lord + Jesus prepared His Apostles for that Day when He proclaimed these things written in the Evangelist St. Luke. These things have been written for our benefit, so that we may know that the Day of the Lord—the Last Day—is coming. In that Day He will take us to our eternal home. He will take us away from this vale of sorrow. He will bring us to the land filled with joy and gladness of heart. He desires us, and all mankind, to dwell with Him in Heaven. He desires that we spend eternity overshadowed by His power and great glory. This is why He prepares us for His coming, by pointing out to us the signs that mark His arrival.

There will be signs in the heavens. There will be distress of nations and perplexity of man. The sea and waves will roar. Men’s hearts will fail from fear and expectation. The powers of the heavens will be shaken. These things are and have happened. Like the budding of the leaves of the fig tree and all the trees telling us that summer is upon us, these signs serve to remind us that our Lord + Jesus is coming to take us to our eternal home in Heaven, just as He promised. He is coming to us on cloud with all of His power and great glory to take us to our heavenly mansion. The Son of Man is coming to give to us all a crown of eternal life. These things are taking place so that we may not lose heart in His promises, but know that His promises have a sure and solid foundation.

He will come to us, His people—the Daughter of Zion—on a cloud. He comes to us veiled in the

cloud of His Word and the cloud of His Blessed Sacraments. He came veiled in the cloud of our flesh. He veiled His divine nature in the cloud of our flesh, so that He might fulfill the Law of God for us and win for us redemption through His sacrifice of Himself on the tree of the holy cross. He has come to us to proclaim with His glorious voice that we are His People—the People of Zion. He has claimed us as His own, so that we may live with Him for all eternity in Heaven.

Therefore, my dear friends, do not be afraid of that Day. While men's hearts are failing them from fear and expectation of that Day, we do not need to be afraid. For our Lord has never left us alone. He continues to come to us whenever we hear His Word and participate in receiving His Sacraments. He continues to come to us so that when He does come on the Last Day in power and great glory on a cloud—when He comes to us in the same way that He ascended into Heaven—we will have never-ending gladness of heart. For we will see the end of all the evil that plagues us in this life today. And we will see the end of all things that cause us fear and trembling. Let us rejoice that that Day approaches quickly. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, who hast appointed a day in which Heaven and Earth shall pass away, and both the quick and the dead shall be judged by the Son of Man, we humbly beseech Thee, make us diligent in the use of Thy Word, and enable us by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit to walk before Thee in fervent faith and all holy obedience, that with constant watchfulness and prayer we may look for, and hasten unto, the second coming of Thy Son, and, being accepted in the Judgment, enter with Him into His eternal kingdom, through the same Thy dear Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!