

Always Be Ready

During Advent, we stand on our tip-toes in anticipation of New Creation, when what happened to Jesus at Easter will happen to the entire universe. Some believe that this week's gospel text (Matthew 24:36-44) is about that event, but I disagree. When I listen to Jesus' words here, I hear him telling the disciples:

- About the end of the age, not the end of the world.
- The age would end with the coming of the Son of Man
- The Son of Man, according to Daniel, is humanity's representative who ascends from earth to heaven, where he is crowned by the Ancient of Days.
- The movement is from earth to heaven, not the other way around.
- This event is the Son of Man's vindication, the destruction of his enemies (emphasized by the imagery of "clouds").
- This event would destroy Jerusalem and its corrupt Temple system "in this generation" (within 40 years of when Jesus was speaking).
- They should run for the hills when they see armies surrounding Jerusalem.
- They would not see the catastrophe coming until the instant it arrived. It would be as unpredictable as Noah's flood or a thief breaking into a house.

That "present evil age" ended in 70 A.D., and the Age of the Messiah's reign began. But Jesus is still the same guy he was back then. He is still the One whose Spirit is like the wind— you never know what it's going to do next. Like a thief, his Kingdom breaks into the world in unpredictable times and places. So in this way, Jesus' message in this text remains relevant to us today: "ALWAYS BE READY."

~ John Stonecypher