

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

End Times Part 1 of 3



Coming . . . Really!

November 12, 2023

AS WE GATHER

It's not a big surprise that no one has accurately predicted the end of the world—not that it hasn't been attempted. From religious sects to cult leaders to apocalyptic predictions made when we entered a new millennium, a fascination grows around those who claim they have it all figured out. We are wise though to take the Lord at His word concerning the Last Day. From Amos in the Old Testament proclaiming the day of the Lord, to Paul writing the Thessalonians about Christ's return, to Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, the Lord does not give us a date or a time of the end of this world as we know it. What He continues to give us, though, are promises of His faithfulness, His continued care and providence, and His assurance that when that day comes, it will usher in a glorious blessedness in His perfect presence that will last forever.

✠ Welcome and Announcements ✠

HYMN "God Whose Almighty Word" 979



1 God, whose al - might - y word Cha - os and
2 Lord, who once came to bring, On Your re -
3 Spir - it of truth and love, Life - giv - ing,
△ 4 Ho - ly and bless - ed Three, Glo - ri - ous



dark - ness heard And took their flight: Hear us, we
deem - ing wing, Heal - ing and sight, Health to the
ho - ly dove, Speed forth Your flight; Move on the
Trin - i - ty, Wis - dom, love, might! Bound - less as



hum - bly pray, And where the Gos - pel day
sick in mind, Sight to the in - ly blind:
wa - ter's face, Bear - ing the lamp of grace,
o - cean's tide, Roll - ing in full - est pride,



Sheds not its glo - rious ray, Let there be light!
Oh, now to hu - man-kind Let there be light!
And in earth's dark - est place Let there be light!
Through the earth, far and wide, Let there be light!

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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Amos 5:18, 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 16; Matthew 25:6, 10*

Pastor: Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD?

People: **Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?**

Pastor: But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

People: **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.**

Pastor: At midnight there was a cry, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."

People: **The bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Amos 5:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:17–18; Matthew 25:13*

Pastor: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

People: **But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father. Merciful Lord, as we await the day when Christ returns, we grow impatient as we wait.

People: **We become distracted by the things of this world that do not last, and have given our attention and even devotion to things not beneficial to our faith. Forgive us.**

Pastor: As we await the day when Christ returns, we grow impatient with others.

People: **We have sinned against others and You in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved You with our whole heart, nor loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us.**

Pastor: As we await the day when Christ returns, we grow impatient with You.

People: **We come to think the day will never come when You make all things new, and have let our earthly circumstances cause faith to waiver, despair to increase, and doubts to arise. Forgive us.**

Pastor: But let justice roll down like waters,

People: **and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

Pastor: And so we will always be with the Lord.

People: **Therefore encourage one another with these words.**

Pastor: In His parable, Jesus reminds His people to “watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” In our watch and in our waiting, the Lord remains faithful to His promises of provision, and assurance of grace and forgiveness. Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

(share the peace of Christ with those around you)

HYMN OF PRAISE

“Rejoice, Rejoice Believers 515
(tune: “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”)

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Rejoice, rejoice, believers,
And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing,
And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising
And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle;
At midnight comes the cry. | 2 | The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near;
Go forth as He approaches
With alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting;
The gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory;
The Bridegroom is at hand. |
| 3 | The saints, who here in patience
Their cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever
When sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory
The Lamb they shall behold;
In triumph cast before Him
Their diadems of gold. | 4 | Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, O Sun so longed for,
O'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted,
We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption
That sets Your people free! |

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SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Lord God, we do not know the day nor the hour of the coming in glory of the Bridegroom, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we wait, continue to nourish our faith until we enter the eternal wedding feast, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Amos 5:18–24* (The day of the Lord and justice)

Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!
Why would you have the day of the LORD?
It is darkness, and not light,
as if a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him,
or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall,
and a serpent bit him.
Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?
“I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the peace offerings of your fattened animals,
I will not look upon them.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *1 Thessalonians 4:13–18* (The coming of the Lord)

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and

rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE *Revelation 7:14b; Psalm 84:5*

Pastor: Alleluia. These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

People: They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 25:1–13* (The parable of the ten virgins)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] “The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ

HYMN OF THE DAY

“The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us” 514



1 The Bride-groom soon will call us, “Come to the wed-ding feast.”
2 There shall we see in glo - ry Our dear Re-deem-er’s face;
3 There God shall from all e - vil For - ev - er make us free,
4 In that fair home shall nev - er Be si - lent mu - sic’s voice;



May slum-ber not be - fall us Nor watch - ful - ness de - crease.
The long - a - wait - ed sto - ry Of heav’n - ly joy takes place:
From sin and from the dev - il, From all ad - ver - si - ty,
With hearts and lips for - ev - er We shall in God re - joice,



May all our lamps be burn - ing With oil e - nough and more
The pa - tri - archs shall meet us, The proph - ets’ ho - ly band;
From sick-ness, pain, and sad - ness, From trou - bles, cares, and fears,
While an - gel hosts are rais - ing With saints from great to least



That we, with Him re - turn - ing, May find an o - pen door!
A - pos - tles, mar - tyrs greet us In that ce - les - tial land.
And grant us heav’n - ly glad - ness And wipe a - way our tears.
A might - y hymn for prais - ing The Giv - er of the feast.

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SERMON

CREED *Nicene Creed*

People: **I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,**

**begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and
the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and
glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life \times of the world to come. Amen.**

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As Jesus invites us to come to Him with petitions and prayers we commonly close our prayers with "Amen." Derived from a Hebrew verb, *amen* means "certainty" or "to confirm." As Martin Luther put it, *amen* means, "Yes, yes, it shall be so." As we await the day of the Lord, we pray in confidence as Scripture closes with the words: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" We, in our wait, come to our Lord in prayer, proclaim our "amens," and confidently invite Him to come.

Let us pray for the people of God in the Bridegroom, Christ Jesus; His Bride, the Church; and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, grant to us all things needful and dissuade us from all things harmful. Fill the oil in our lamps, strengthen and nourish our faith, that united, together we as Your Church and as Your people confidently and courageously shine Your light to our neighbors, our community, and the world. Amen.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, keep us ready in our waiting for the promised day to come when the door is opened and we are welcomed to the wedding feast. In our wait, keep us from earthly distractions that would lead us away from You. By Your Holy Spirit, keep us prepared to welcome Jesus when He comes in all His glory at the hour and the day You have set, as we remain trusting in Your promises made, promises fulfilled, and promises to come. Amen.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, You have already called faithful servants from this life as they are in Your glorious care and await the resurrection. For we who remain on this earth, give comfort and hope to those who grieve, [*especially* . . .]. For those who struggle with health of mind or sickness of body, grant healing according to Your will and lasting peace in light of affliction, [*especially* . . .]. For all those whose needs are known only to You and for all who face the afflictions of this life while awaiting the Last Day at Your time, grant patience. Amen.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, as we pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” awaiting His return, we know that in the meantime He even comes to us now through Your Word and Means of Grace. In the body and blood given and shed for us in, with, and under the bread and wine given and received, forgive us our sins and nourish our faith in our waiting that our hearts and lives be reflective of the grace You freely give. Amen.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Additional prayers are added and we reply with “Come, Lord Jesus”

Pastor: Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who invites us to call you Father and pray together the prayer He has given us:

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

People: **Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
 as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

CLOSING RESPONSE *Amos 5:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:17–18; Matthew 25:13;
Revelation 22:20–21*

Pastor: But let justice roll down like waters,

People: **and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

Pastor: And so we will always be with the Lord.

People: **Therefore encourage one another with these words.**

Pastor: Watch therefore,

People: **for you know neither the day nor the hour.**

Pastor: He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

People: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

Pastor: The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

People: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

People: **Amen.**

HYMN “Before You Lord We Bow” 966
(in recognition of Veteran’s Day)



1 Be - fore You, Lord, we bow, Our God who reigns a - bove
2 The na - tion You have blest May well Your love de - clare,
3 May ev - 'ry moun - tain height, Each vale and for - est green,
4 Earth, hear your Mak - er's voice; Your great Re - deem - er own;
5 And when in pow'r He comes, Oh, may our na - tive land



And rules the world be - low, Bound-less in pow'r and love. Our thanks
From foes and fears at rest, Pro - tect - ed by Your care. For this
Shine in Your Word's pure light, And its rich fruits be seen! May ev -
Be - lieve, o - bey, re - joice, And wor-ship Him a - lone. Cast down
From all its rend - ing tombs Send forth a glo-rious band, A count -



we bring In joy and praise, Our hearts we raise To You, our King!
bright day, For this fair land—Gifts of Your hand—Our thanks we pay.
'ry tongue Be tuned to praise And join to raise A grate - ful song.
your pride, Your sin de - plore, And bow be - fore The Cru - ci - fied.
less throng, With joy to sing To heav'n's high King Sal - va - tion's song!

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