

1st Sunday of Advent



The beginning of the new church year is marked by images of the end of time. For the Jews, the end would bring restoration of the Davidic monarchy. For Christians the reign of God brings a sense of final justice.

In the 1st reading, the Babylonian exile has begun. All the Jewish leaders and able bodied males are deported. This is done to insure that no army could be raised against the Babylonians. Family ties are ruptured. Land is confiscated. The temple is destroyed. At first the author preaches non-resistance, but changes his tone to one of hopefulness in the midst of despair. In times of greatest darkness, we find the Scriptures filled with images of hope. The Jews were reminded that they were the chosen ones; that Yahweh would preserve David's lineage. The city would be restored and the people would live in safety.

The 2nd reading reminds Christians that they are receivers of this promise fulfilled. They receive God's blessing through the Gospel. The fullness of the message will be realized with the final coming of Jesus when our hearts will be blameless and holy.

Jews lived for the messiah to return Jerusalem to power and rebuild the temple. In the Gospel the coming reign of God would release mighty forces of destruction. Within this turmoil, the Son of Man will come with power and glory. The community is to pray for strength to withstand the destructive forces of society. To prepare, Christians are to maintain prayerful watchfulness which will free them from anxiety. With confidence and hope, they are to stand up. Their redemption is near. Their rescue is imminent.