

*“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves...”*

Now how can that happen?! That goes against the laws of physics!

Oh...how we tend to judge God by our own very limited human capabilities...making believe that WE are gods of power and knowledge.

God is not bound by the material laws that we have discerned...no more than a child is bound to the laws he makes in his own imagination while playing a game.

God is the ultimate law...the ultimate “physics”, as it were...and if Jesus (God) says it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen...

...or are we so foolish to think: “Yeah...God said it, but He can’t make it happen.”

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And so we begin this new Advent season—a time of waiting and preparation for our Savior...examining our lives so that we may re-orient ourselves to live (as St. Paul exhorts us today) in a manner pleasing to God.

How do we do that? The scriptures—especially the New Testament and the Gospels—and the Holy Spirit’s guidance of the Church, are For. Just. That.—to reveal to us how to live in accordance with the will of our God and our Father...which is the way to true happiness both on earth and in Heaven...because that true happiness is ultimately what God desires for us.

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Now St. Paul tells us today: *“May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all...to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father.”*

“Holiness” means “likeness to God”. And that’s why Jesus comes to us—to teach us how to “re-form” ourselves into God’s likeness.

And because Jesus IS God, He is (literally!) the perfect model for us...and the more we emulate Him in our attitudes and behavior—in love of God and neighbor—the holier we become, and the more we please God.

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Now the word “Advent”, of course, means “arrival” or “a coming onto the scene”...and that’s exactly what God does in the birth of Jesus: He comes onto our scene in flesh and blood and soul just like ours...and yet without surrendering His divinity. God cannot NOT be God.

The early church was embroiled in controversies about who Jesus is. Is He God simply “clothed” in flesh? Is He a created being like us but given great powers (the Arian heresy)? What?

But the Church soon discerned that Jesus is truly God AND truly Man—wholly divine AND wholly human.

And why does God do this? Out of pure, undeserved, unmerited love for us.

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Jesus refers to Himself today as “the Son of Man”...an interesting phrase used also by the prophet Daniel to refer to the King—the Messiah—who is to come to rule over all nations.

In his vision, Daniel sees the image of the eternal king in the form of a man—something he would not have understood, but simply acts as a reporter.

But because we know Christ, the meaning becomes clear: the second of the three persons of the Holy Trinity humbled Himself to be enfleshed—the become incarnate—and born of a human woman.

So one can think of the term “Son of Man” as angels contemplating the humility of God...pointing at Jesus and gasping: “There is He who even lowered Himself to be brought forth from His own

creation—to be born of woman (*and thus ‘Son of Man’*) out of love for them.”

After all...what does love do but humble itself before its beloved? And who has humbled Himself more than God at becoming one of His own creatures...and dying for them?

And so Advent is a time for “watching” and anticipating the coming of Christ...and a time for our own self-examination...to conform our own wills to His.

For God Himself comes to us--the Creator of the Heavens and earth...and humbles Himself to be born a human like ourselves...in a dung-strewn stable among the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep.

He who is above Heaven and earth comes down and is laid in a feed trough...caked w/ dirt and animal spittle.

He, to whom all riches of the earth belong, lived and worked in a derided little village in the desert...sweating, dirty, hungry...for thirty years.

He, with legions of angels at His command, humbles himself before those who would destroy him.

And even after healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and even raising the dead...was rejected.

Then this eternal living God...allows Himself to be whipped, nailed naked to a cross to the sounds of ridicule...and suffers the agony of death...all for love of YOU.

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So during Advent, let us remember all that God has done for us—for one purpose: that we may conform ourselves to Him and thus live with Him forever.

Nothing on this earth even approaches the importance of being faithful to God...because only God is eternal...and only He grants eternal life.

If we are faithful, we will laugh at the signs that Jesus speaks of today...for we will know they are the signs of the coming of Christ...the coming of eternal life.

So, this Advent, let us examine our lives...holding firm to God's law and teaching...so that we may (as St. Paul exhorts) be found blameless in holiness... thinking less of earth and more of Heaven...to come to live with Him in joy and thanksgiving forever.

**Reading 1 Jer 33:14-16**

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The days are coming, says the LORD,  
when I will fulfill the promise  
I made to the house of Israel and Judah.  
In those days, in that time,  
I will raise up for David a just shoot ;  
he shall do what is right and just in the land.  
In those days Judah shall be safe  
and Jerusalem shall dwell secure;  
this is what they shall call her:  
"The LORD our justice."

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14**

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R. (1b) **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**  
Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;  
teach me your paths,  
Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my savior,  
and for you I wait all the day.  
R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**  
Good and upright is the LORD;  
thus he shows sinners the way.  
He guides the humble to justice,  
and teaches the humble his way.  
R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**  
All the paths of the LORD are kindness and constancy  
toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.  
The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him,  
and his covenant, for their instruction.  
R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

**Reading 2 1 Thes 3:12-4:2**

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Brothers and sisters:  
May the Lord make you increase and abound in love  
for one another and for all,  
just as we have for you,  
so as to strengthen your hearts,  
to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones. Amen.

Finally, brothers and sisters,  
we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that,  
as you received from us  
how you should conduct yourselves to please God  
and as you are conducting yourselves  
you do so even more.  
For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

**Gospel Lk 21:25-28, 34-36**

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Jesus said to his disciples:

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,  
and on earth nations will be in dismay,  
perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

People will die of fright  
in anticipation of what is coming upon the world,  
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see **the Son of Man**  
coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

But when these signs begin to happen,  
stand erect and raise your heads  
because your redemption is at hand.

**"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy  
from carousing and drunkenness  
and the anxieties of daily life,  
and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.**

For that day will assault everyone  
who lives on the face of the earth.

**Be vigilant at all times  
and pray that you have the strength  
to escape the tribulations that are imminent  
and to stand before the Son of Man."**