

Prepare Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, November 28, 2015
8:15 AM Dn 7:15-27; **Lk 21:34-36** (BVM) (We have to live the right kind of life.
We have to respond to the word of God. We have to get our house in order, so to speak, and be ready.)

“Be vigilant at all times.”

It is clear from both the Old and the New Testament that the people who lived in covenant with God had a sense of history with a beginning and an end. In fact, **the idea that there is a beginning and an end was actually created by the people of the Bible.** That was not in the secular world, so to speak. The Greeks didn't have that idea. The Babylonians didn't have that idea. They had an idea that their places descended, as it were, from eternity. The gods created their society, set up their government, and so on. They didn't have a clear idea that human beings really create history; that is a Jewish idea. If you read the myths of the ancient peoples, human being are just pawns on a chessboard; the gods are the players, not **for the Jews.** Human beings are not pawns. **Human beings are images of God with free will, intelligence; and what they do really matters.** In that way, perhaps the Bible has converted the whole world. I think most people realize that life on earth does depend upon human beings and their choices. People who don't recognize that are pretty sad, although there probably are some that do not.

Here in this particular Gospel according to Luke, **Jesus is speaking about the end.** There will be an end to this affair. Now science admits there's going to be an end, even though this is relatively recent that science has come to the realization that the entire universe did have a beginning fourteen billion years ago or so. Einstein himself did not believe that originally. He thought the universe was eternal, as did Leibnitz, as did many. Even into the 1960s there were some scientists that believed that. **It was the background radiation discovered in 1974 that cleared the way to understanding the Big Bang and the origin of the universe.**

Well, now there will be also an end to all this. Our earth has been around about four and half billion years or so, and will probably be around for maybe another four billion years. Whether we have life on it or not is up to us, I suppose. But in terms of its cosmic life it's about in the middle of its long journey, so with the sun. But this isn't about that. This isn't about geology.

This is about human life. And **Jesus says, well, human life will end suddenly.** Now does he mean that for you individually, that suddenly you will die someday, or does he mean it for

everybody all at once? Probably the text indicates it means everybody all at once. But as time has gone on, most theologians interpret this individually, which is of course a truism we rarely look at: **we will all die**. But not necessarily suddenly, but we will also die. Very often, however, it is sudden. And even if it's drawn out, **it may be unprepared for. The point here is prepare—prepare for it**. Whether it comes quickly or not, we have to be prepared because life on earth is not destined forever. **We are destined for something else.**

And in order to get something else, **we have to prepare now. We have to live the right kind of life. We have to respond to the word of God. We have to get our house in order, so to speak, and be ready**. This is all about being ready, so that whether we live today or don't, live tomorrow or don't, it doesn't matter. This is speaking against the typical kinds of anxiety people have. People are often worried about all kinds of things. **Jesus says not to worry. Anxiety actually is a kind of drunkenness.** Anxiety is a kind of intoxication, according to this. And we do naturally worry about all kinds of things: our wellbeing, the wellbeing of our families. St. Thomas would say that the more we worry about the wellbeing of others, the better we are because that's charity, as opposed to self-interest. But here it says, well, **just put all that in God's hands and get ready for your own end**. And if you are ready for your own end, then whatever happens, happens: good, bad, whatever, tribulation; **whatever happens you will be ready for it, and to live with an expectation**. That's what this gospel is trying to encourage us to prepare for. And if we do, then we can live with a certain sort of inner peace; and that's the goal.