

# ***Third Sunday of the Holy Cross – The End of the World***

## ***(Feast of the Holy Cross of Varak)***

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian  
St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX  
September 25, 2016  
Gospel Reading: Matthew 24:30-36*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today's Gospel reading is actually the middle of a long conversation between Christ and His disciples about the end of the world and His second coming. Before today's reading begins, Christ warns the disciples that there will be many who will say, "I am the Christ" or "Here is the Christ" and will fool many. They will be great violence and many of His followers will be persecuted for His name and that there will be earthquakes and other natural disasters.

The Sun will grow black and the moon will no longer give light and the stars will fall to the earth. Then, the sign of the Son of Man, the cross, will appear in the sky and Christ will come on the clouds in all His glory. The angels will be sent to gather all the nations and they will be judged according to what they have done. He then concludes today's reading, saying that no one knows the hour or the day when this will happen, so be ready.

When we hear all this, we learn three great truths:

1. God has not abandoned the world; even in its wickedness, the world is where God's plan and purpose will be worked out. It is not abandonment, but intervention.
2. We must not be discouraged by the increase of evil and violence, because Christ warns that moral standards will breakdown and the world will disintegrate. All of this is a precursor to re-creation and not destruction.
3. Judgment and a new creation are certain and they are near, because justice and mercy are part of God's plan and timing.

Yet, no matter the situation of the world, God has not abandoned it, but His return is also near. We forget and lose track of time, not realizing that the end of the world and the Second Coming is coming soon. This is best understood in the following story.

There was once three demons who had studied under Satan and were preparing to go out into the world. Satan told them they had to pass the final exam, before they could go out. He asks them, “What will you whisper into people’s ears, so they come to Hell?”

The first demon says, “I will tell people that there is no God or heaven.” Satan says, “That is not good enough. People only need to look at nature and they will know that God and heaven exist. You have failed.”

The second demon says, “I will tell people that there is no Satan or hell.” Satan says, “That too is not good. People will see the injustices and violence in the world and they will realize that hell is real. You have also failed.”

Then the third demon says, “I will tell people that there is no rush.” Satan exclaims, “That is great! We will make people believe they have plenty of time to change and they will put it off. We will win many souls! You have passed.”

We do not know when Christ will return, but Jesus Christ says, “Behold, I am coming soon” (Rev. 22:20), thus, we must be ready. So as we see the world around us falling apart and society disintegrating before us, we must remember that God has not abandoned us, but He is preparing to make this world a new creation. We too must prepare for that new creation, by starting today and not putting it off for another day.

Amen.