

Wednesday Reflection

Title: Apocalyptic thinking

Date: November 16, 2025

ID: 33rd Sunday of the Year

Scripture: Luke 21:5-19

FSS is my book *For Us and For our Salvation*.

Text: An excellent summary of apocalyptic thinking comes from the late Cardinal Martini: “It is not a frustration with the present, but rather a prolongation of the experience of fullness, in other words, ‘salvation,’ as it was construed by the early church. There isn’t now, nor will there be, a power human or satanic that can challenge the hope of believers” (FFS p. 136). The word *apocalypse* has come to mean the *end of the world* or *destruction*. The biblical definition is quite different. It means *revelation* or *unveiling*. For about three hundred years, bridging the two biblical testaments, authors wrote apocalyptic literature to convey hope. The literature is symbolic. It is not factual. The inspired authors hide a message from their overlords in the symbolic text. They affirm that God’s kingdom will triumph. Goodness will overcome evil; love triumphs over hatred; peace vanquishes violence; freedom wins out over oppression. (Read John’s apocalyptic book Revelation chapter 7 and/or chapter 19 to the end of the book to experience God’s victory)

In dark times, faith is hard to maintain. Today’s believers need to look to salvation history. Since the time of Abraham and Sarah, faith in Yahweh has involved a promise of God’s providential care and future salvation. In the Hebrew Scriptures (called the Old Testament) salvation is not otherworldly or disembodied. It is peace and freedom, prosperity, good health, a land of one’s own, a nurturing family. That same sense of salvation spills over into the New Testament, seen in Jesus’s compassionate miracles. Most of all, the Lord’s resurrection, the transformation of His tortured body into a glorified state, confirms the message. Even now, Christians must keep faith in the promise by maintaining a hope-filled mood.

To get hold of this Sunday’s Gospel, please remember the levels of history in it. Jesus lived around 30 AD. Luke wrote around 85-90 AD. The events recorded in today’s Gospel occurred in 70 AD. In that year, Rome put down a revolt with a vicious campaign against Israel. Roman soldiers burnt down the temple. Some historians estimate a massive Jewish death toll. What Luke describes had happened. Luke’s apocalyptic writing marked one of the darkest times in Israel’s history. But Luke knew that Christianity and Judaism, the faiths in Yahweh, had survived. The good news persevered. God’s promise held even in the darkest times.

This Gospel offers two lessons. First, all times have their darkness. Sin exists. Evil exists. Their existence does not signal the end of time or the Lord’s second coming. The ministerial charlatans of the end-times should not fool believers. Second, the Spirit of God will guide us even through the darkest times. Christians should search within and heed the gentle voice of the Spirit guiding us to maintain the way of the Lord through the times. Maintaining hope through tough times and living His way regardless of the circumstances lead to inner peace and significant satisfaction. No human or satanic power can challenge the hope of believers.