

world without end

Almost everything has an expiration date. Even big beautiful buildings that seem like they will last forever. Jesus (Mark 13:1-8), standing in front of the Jerusalem Temple, and speaking to people who are petty impressed with the construction, says that there will come a day when that building is torn down. And, he was right. About forty years after Jesus the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple. The Gospel of Mark was written in the last few years leading up to its destruction, or right in the aftermath of its destruction.

In Hebrews (Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25), a sermon written by an unknown author, we find a similar argument as we've seen through the past six weeks, where the priesthood of Jesus is exalted high above the priesthood of the Jerusalem Temple. But here, we find an exhortation to draw strength from this priesthood to live a holy life with love amidst the Christian community.

Hannah is praying for a child (1 Samuel 1:4-20). She's praying from the very depths of her longing. Standing there only steps away from the Ark of the Covenant was no time for thee's and thou's. No time for stilted awkwardness, and fake formality. She was pouring out her very soul. Her heart. She was communicating to a God she knew and loved. And, she was bearing a heavy burden, a burden she was willing to unload on her Lord.

The Book of Daniel was written by a Jew living through the captivity in Babylon. The first six chapters are stories of the royal court in Babylon, and the rest of the book - including this morning's lesson (Daniel 12:1-3) - are apocalyptic visions. This text is about what is commonly called in the Hebrew Bible, "The Day of the Lord," where the righteous dead are reunited with the righteous living.

Prayer

All things have their beginning in you, O God, and though everything else fail, falls, and ceases to be, you Lord have no end. As we prepare for your coming into the world, we pray that you would more and more come into our hearts. Amen.

On the way to "soccer practice"...

You will notice that as we get closer and closer to Advent, the readings get darker and darker, and are increasingly about the end of the world, the Day of the Lord, and the return of Christ. This is a foreshadowing of the main theme of Advent, which is all about the coming of Christ into the world. What does this mean to you? What does it mean to worship God who is eternal and yet wants to come among us?

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