

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Watertown, WI**

**“Even So, Lord Jesus, Come Quickly”**

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*“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence” (Is. 64:1).*

There have been days this year when I think every serious Christian was hoping, praying the Lord would stir up His power and come. So much is wrong with the world and with us.

The Corona Virus, and all its accoutrements. Police brutality followed by protests, riots, looting. Record setting wildfires out west, and hurricanes and tropical storms pounding southern states, measured now by letters in the Greek alphabet.

An acrimonious election followed by claims it was stolen. Politicians playing fast and loose with the truth, as if it just doesn't matter anymore.

At the personal level, nothing feels quite right . . . not at work or schools or the grocery stores, not around the thanksgiving table, or at church or restaurants or assisted living facilities.

This year it's a little easier to pray that Advent prayer, “Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come!” Save us by Your mighty deliverance. Rescue us from the threatening perils of our sins.

Our text is an Advent prayer. “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence.” Historically, it is interesting to know this verse was consistently used by the Jews during the Holocaust, as they grieved the most horrendous persecutions and atrocities. 2020 is nothing like the holocaust. However, there are circumstances and conditions from which only the Lord can save us. The LORD God has promised to come. Wouldn't it be a good time right now, because only the Lord can make things right again. Only the Lord has the strength to fix what is broken.

At the end of the last chapter of the last book in the Bible, Jesus promised, “Lo, I am coming soon.” And we respond with John, “Amen. Come LORD Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20). We say this knowing His return will be preceded by the catastrophic. In Matthew 24 Jesus gives us some of the signs that his return is near: “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes . . . they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.” Even so Lord Jesus, come! Come quickly!

Still, there's more. Jesus says, “Many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. Lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.” Fearsome stuff, all of it! Even so, stir up your power, O Lord, and come! Bring it on because we know You love us. Let it happen because we know You will see us through. Come Lord Jesus, because either You rend the heavens and come down, or we are lost. It is that simple. We cannot come to you; we need you to come to us.

We are bold to pray, “Rend the heavens and come down” because we know He came once already not to condemn us but to save us. He came to die on the cross for us and redeem us. Through His suffering and death, Jesus did whatever needed doing for us.

We are bold to pray, “Stir up Your power O Lord, and come” because we know He has already prepared us for His return. He’s been preparing us all along, even since before the foundation of the world, setting in place the plan of salvation. He’s been preparing us through the prophets and apostles. He’s been preparing us through the martyrs and the reformers and through our forebearers who brought the faith with them to this good land and built churches and schools for us to use. He’s been preparing us through the baptism with which you’ve been baptized. Because of it, you bear His name and have been made His children.

He’s been preparing us through our grandparents and parents who taught us the faith, through your Sunday School teachers who helped you memorize Scripture, gave you a little gold star, if not for successful completion, then at least for last minute effort. And through those in VBS who brilliantly taught the stories of Scripture using song and crafts and flannel boards and even snacks to fit the theme. Week in and week out He’s been preparing us for His return using Word and Sacrament in this place. So, we pray confidently for His return, knowing we will fear no evil because He’s with us every step of the way, with His rod and staff in hand.

We are bold to sing, “O come, O come Immanuel” because His return is a good thing for those who belong to Jesus, for all of us who have been forgiven. We yearn for that day of judgment because we’ve already been acquitted – found “not guilty” – pardoned, set free, and rescued. His forgiveness covers us over like a cloak so we can stand without fear even before the judgment seat of Christ.

We pray Him to return not just because the days are evil, but because he will free us from all evil. His return means an end to all evil—the final uprooting of wickedness. Rev. 20, “The dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil will be thrown into the pit and it will be shut and sealed over him, so that he will not deceive the nations any longer” (v. 2).

For us His people, when He comes again it is the moment we open our eyes after a long, terrible nightmare. It is like the doctor pronouncing you healthy after a long, life-threatening illness. It’s the police stopping by to say they caught the one who did you great harm and have locked him up for good. It’s the voice message that lets you know your family is safe and well after the earthquake. It is the final mopping up of God’s war against evil, a war Jesus won for us when He died and rose again from the dead.

For us His return means the beginning of new life, the new heavens and new earth, real, lasting happiness and peace and unity, new colors you’ve never seen before, new music you’ve never heard before, new wines the likes of which you’ve never tasted, new relationships and the restoration and reunion of old relationships, in a fellowship and communion you’ve never really known before. “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

This will be the life that no human being has had since Adam and Eve ruined everything. This will be the life God intended for us when He said, “I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly”.

So, yes Lord, bring it on. Rend the heavens and come down. Even now make of 2020 the best year ever and always. Make the mountains quake, and the devil too. Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen.