

READ:

Jeremiah
33:14-16

Luke
21:25-26

*The Lord said, "The time is coming when I will fulfill the promise that I made to the people of Israel and Judah. . . . The people of Judah and of Jerusalem will be rescued and will live in safety. The city will be called 'The Lord Our Salvation.'" (GNT).
Jeremiah 33:14, 16*

PRAYER:

*Lord, help us prepare our hearts to welcome anew the Christ Child, who is our hope for the salvation of the world.
Amen.*

Hope for the World

Right on the heels of Thanksgiving and Black Friday, Christians observe the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of the church year. I chose this day because the "stars aligned": today is my mother's birthday, and the scripture passage is from Jeremiah, after whom my older son was named.

The Old Testament prophet lived in a troubled time for the Jewish people. He had warned the people that their idolatry and sin would lead to a catastrophe: Jerusalem—including the temple, the center of their religion—was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, and the people of Israel were exiled to Babylon.

Yet, as our scripture points out, Jeremiah proclaimed God's words: "The time is coming when I will fulfill the promise that I made . . . the people . . . will be rescued and will live in safety." And yes, the people did eventually return to Israel and rebuild the temple. Jeremiah's hope was fulfilled. Thus, when our first child was born, he was named Jeremy as a sign of our hope for the future.

Centuries later a star appeared when a child was born to an unwed mother in a stable in Bethlehem, a child who was to become the savior of the world. But even during Christ's life on earth, there were dire predictions, as Luke writes: "Nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea." We might be reminded of this past year, with the hurricanes and torrential rains that devastated so many areas. In addition, the world is still being devastated by COVID-19. Most likely, disasters will continue to occur on our planet. We need to do what we can to preserve the world God gave us.

Let us use this time of Advent to remember the promises God made through the prophets.