***Luke 21:25-28 “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”***

This morning, we lit the candle of Hope. As we talked about last week, we are in the Advent Season. Advent means coming or arrival. Jesus came in the first Advent over 2000 years ago. He has assured us that He is coming again in a Second Advent. We do well to be ready and watching. Blessed is the servant that the Master finds waiting faithfully, hopefully, joyfully, peacefully when He comes. Be it in the Rapture or be it that He gather us one by one, let’s wait with Hope, while working to live out and spread the Gospel daily.

Jesus has been talking to His disciples. Imagine that we are listening in, standing there in the Temple, having just witnessed the widow place her two mites into the treasury. Jesus has foretold the destruction of the Temple, which happened in 70 AD, when the Romans sacked Jerusalem. When we study the Bible in the evenings, we find that a prophecy may apply to both a near event and a distant event. Such prophecies are known as dual fulfillment. When we studied Daniel for example, we learned of fulfillments just prior to Jesus First Advent and we learned of fulfillments still to be at His Second Advent. We leave the evening services understanding how scripture applies to us today. It seems that the first fulfillment is usually more localized and the second is global. Much of what Jesus is telling us here in Luke 21 had a near time fulfillment and will have an end time fulfillment – a dual fulfillment. Verse 25 says - *And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring.* As we look to the heavens for Jesus Second Coming, there will be a general decaying of the natural things. Jesus has already described earthquakes, famines, saying there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. Things that were once dependable will no longer be dependable. This will be a time of great anxiety – distress of nations, perplexity. Dreadful calamities will happen before the second coming of Jesus to take His church home.

Verse 26 M*en’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* Fear will overtake people. Anxiety and fear will be everywhere. Anguish will rise like at no other time. Some theologians interpret the powers of heaven to be the church or religious leaders. The church will undergo a time of being shaken, deserting it’s foundations, deserting the Bible, a great falling away. 2 Thess tells us that there will be a great falling away – people turning their backs on the church and on faith. In 2 Thess 2, Paul says - *we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled*. The humans with failing hearts of fear do not know Jesus, do not hold the Hope we hold.

Verse 27 - *Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* Here’s our promise!Jesus coming in a cloud – Shechinah. The cloud we talked about last week that took Him away. This representation of divine presence. Jesus will come in like manner, as Acts 1 promised. The world will see! It won’t be a secret. But the world will deny it happened. A strong delusion will fall upon people and they’ll explain away how Grandma and Grandpa just disappeared, the sister they always made fun of is gone, the pastor they called isn’t answering anymore – the church will be taken up and yet 2 Thess 2:11-12 *And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* God will give them over to their sin and reprobate minds, giving them over to their delusions.

Verse 28 *- Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.* In verse 26, we learned how the unbelievers will react – hearts failing in fear, dread, anguish at the calamities all around. Now, we learn how we are to react – Look up! Lift up your heads! Hope! Why? Because our redemption, our Hope, our Redeemer draws near! While the hearts of the children of this world are failing, our hearts soar in Hope. The distress of the nations do not phase us, the world deteriorating does not depress us, the prattle and prating of people denying God does not deter us. We see these things happening and we lift up our heads expecting to see Jesus any moment.

This week, let’s get it deep in our hearts – today may be the day our redemption draws near. If not today, we’re are not discouraged, we are not disillusioned, we are not disappointed. We surrender, submit, and serve. And when we go to bed tonight, we lie down in peace, knowing that tomorrow might be the day when we meet Jesus and He takes us home. He is coming again – He told us so. Will He find us waiting and watching when the Shechinah cloud comes with our Redeemer on board?