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And the end **will** come. And we will be judged. Judged not on what prayerbook we use, or how many candles are on the Altar or whether or not we use incense, or whether we make mistakes or whether we consecrate women as bishops of the Church — but we will be judged on how we loved. Loved God — and loved our neighbor.

So our future rests in the everlasting arms of Holy Love, not human ingenuity. And so in our little corner of the world — here in Sedona, we can continue our work with God as we have done since this parish was founded. We can continue our work in the ongoing work of redemption and conversion and pray without fear: **Come Lord Jesus!**

In Nomine.....

But the end will come. God created the beginning of all things, and he will be there at the end of all things. And the end will be in His hands — as the beginning was. And that is something that is both comforting and disturbing.

Jesus came into the midst of this world — not to condemn and annihilate it but to save and heal it. If this were not so, there would have been no Easter. So at the end of the world, as at the beginning there is only one God, the Holy one. That is why we do not pray in the Lord's Prayer, Thy Judgement Come, but **thy kingdom come**. We don't know when — and we are wasting our time if we try to predict when. God has better things for us to do than try to pretend that we know when the end will come.

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Living in New York, I know I did.

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Many people felt that kind of fear on September 11, 2001. We didn't know what was to come. Where were these attackers going to hit next. Where ~~can~~ ^{could} we run and hide? The fear felt by many people was as tangible and real as the fear that filled those folks who were faced with persecution in the first century. For many people 9/11 seemed like the beginning of the end of the world. I heard people say that very thing.

But there have been many folks who have predicted the end of the world — mis-using the strange book of Revelation — and guess what — we're still here.

*Prophecy of the end times
C. S. Lewis*

Many of these new Christians are scared and are beginning to question their faith: “Where is Jesus, the Christ, in all of this horror?” They are wondering, and understandably so, “When will He return in the second coming, to save us from all of this? Or more crucially, did I make a mistake by becoming a follower of Jesus?”

To top it all off, the temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. So what we find here is a community of Jewish Christians that is caught between fear of abandonment and panic — and hope and expectation of the second coming, which will save them. Mark is trying to keep the faithful from being falsely pessimistic without giving them false hopes

So for them all the signs of the end of time are present. And they're scared out of their wits. They are faced with an unknown future.

Now let's jump ahead about 200 years to sometime after 70 AD to the time when Mark was writing his Gospel, the first of the Gospels to be written. By this time, the Christian community to which he was writing was in the midst of a persecution as horrible as any before or since. Christians are being burned alive, as lamplight for Nero's parties; Families are separated with many sold into slavery. Christians are bagged and then fed to wild beasts before bloodthirsty crowds. Many of the leaders, including Peter, and Paul have been executed.

And many of the people who had known Jesus were getting old. Many had died and the rest were getting older. So Mark decides to write his gospel so that there will be a record of those days.

Reading,
~~Lesson~~ The book of Daniel, an alternative Old Testament
Lesson, was written about 168 BC And it was written
during a crisis of immense proportions for the Jewish
world. Because you see the Syrian Emperor Antioches
IV had set up a statue of one of his gods in the temple.
The worst of all possible scenarios for any Jew at that
time. And not until the Romans destroyed the temple
in 70 AD ~~at there~~ was there anything close to this
awful sacrilege.

So to all intents and purposes all worship had
ceased there. Not until that statue was removed and
the temple rededicated, could Jews again worship
there. Not until then would God be present in their
midst.

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What I'm saying is that the end of time had a reality for them that it doesn't for us.

We see lots of movies that depict end of time scenarios and so any talk of such thing for many folks enters the realm of fantasy. And of course, we are all very sophisticated people and our science can tell all about the heavens and eclipses and that sort of thing. So any talk of end of time seems unreal to us.

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But for first century Jews this was not so. The temple in Jerusalem was the focal point of their life. In reality it was very much like Mecca has become to the Muslims of today. Even though a Jew might never visit the temple in Jerusalem, its presence meant that God was in their midst and would not desert them.

In all apocalyptic writing there is talk of what the signs of the end are and usually that they are here now! Scary stuff. ~~In other words the end is near very near.~~

In order to understand any scripture passage – we need to know something about the time in which it was written, or else it can often be very incomprehensible. It can make no sense. This is especially true of Apocalyptic literature.

So to more readily get a handle on this we need to understand that for many of the Jews of Jesus' time, the signs of the end were there. It wasn't like the cartoons that we see that portray a man standing on a corner saying that the end is near – and elicit a snicker from us. For first century Jews the signs WERE there.

Today's readings in a sense, are a wake up call. The Gospel passage which we just read comes from the part of Mark that has come to be known as the *Little Apocalypse*.

As you have heard before from this pulpit, from me and others, Apocalyptic writing is writing about the end of time. The Last things. And in reality, apocalyptic literature is far scarier than any of the Halloween movies that are shown on television around All Hallow's Eve.

For you and me, what I call modern people, this end of time is something that we don't like to talk about because it's either so scary, or because it is so unreal.

other early morning hours, and nothing happened. Nothing appeared in the heavens except the stars that had been shining there for millions of years. At sun-up, the disillusioned crowd scattered and those who had not gotten rid of their ~~homes~~^{homes}, went home to an early breakfast.

Amazingly enough, this is not the only example of this sort of thing in history. Again and again people have claimed to be able to predict the end of the world -- pointing to all sorts of things and calculations and yet their efforts have always had the same result. Zilch; nada; nothing. And the practice continues. Well, what about the end of history?? How are we to relate to such an idea?

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in your sight, O Lord our strength and our redeemer. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

On the night of March 21, 1843 a large crowd gathered in a place called Low Hampton, New York. They were followers of a preacher named William Miller, who had been predicting for some time that history would end on that night. Now all of the people who gathered that night sincerely believed that this prediction was true. Some of them had gotten rid of their property because they knew that there was to be no tomorrow; others were dressed in long, white robes and some even climbed on the roofs of barns, so that they might sooner meet their Lord as he returned in the air. The appointed hour was midnight. As the time approached, the anticipation reached a frenzied pitch. But midnight came and midnight went -- as did the

As was promised by Mr Miller.