

“STAND FIRM”

Pastor Becky Stephens

Text: Luke 21:25-36

According to many scholars, this text has two significant parts. The first part concerns the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem (vs. 8-24). This is the text just prior to today’s reading. The second part (today’s reading) concerns the signs and chaos engulfing the entire world (vs. 25-36)

The End is creeping closer and closer. Jesus makes remarks about how there will be signs so “Stand up straight”—STAND FIRM.

Hear verses 25-27

There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On the earth, there will be dismay among nations in their confusion over the roaring of the sea and surging waves. The planets and other heavenly bodies will be shaken, causing people to faint upon the world. Then they will see the Human One coming on a cloud with power and great splendor.

Jesus says, when you see these things to “Stand up Straight”—STAND FIRM.

Verse 28

Now when these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads, because your redemption is near.

Why does Jesus say “stand up straight”? Because He is on his way to earth to REDEEM it!

Paul says to the Romans in 11:26: *“Do not be unaware of this secret...the deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodly behavior from Jacob. This is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”*

Another reason He says to “Stand up straight” is He is on his way to earth to REIGN over it!

STAND FIRM...I will reign over sadness. Isaiah 65:19 says that *“No one will ever hear the sound of weeping or crying in it again.”*

STAND FIRM...I will reign over what death does. Isaiah 65:20 says *“No more will babies live only a few days, or the old fail to live out their days.”*

STAND FIRM...I will reign over creation that is in the process of decay. Paul says in Romans 8:20 *“Creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice—it was the choice of the one who subjected it—but in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from slavery to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of God’s children. We know that the whole creation is groaning together and suffering labor pains up until now.”*

Jesus says STAND FIRM...you know it’s coming!

Hear verses 29-31

Jesus told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that God’s kingdom is near.”

Jesus says, STAND FIRM...what is coming is GOOD, for in my Father’s house are many mansions. It is GOOD because you will have a heavenly

rest. It is GOOD because you will taste and see that God is GOOD. It is GOOD because you will have eternal life where the soul never dies.

Jesus says, STAND FIRM and continue making disciples for the transformation of the world! STAND FIRM and keep searching for the one lost sheep that got away! STAND FIRM and continue being the Church!

Hear verses 32-36

"I assure you that this generation won't pass away until everything has happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away. Take care that your hearts aren't dulled by drinking parties, drunkenness, and the anxieties of day-to-day life. Don't let that day fall upon you unexpectedly, like a trap. It will come upon everyone who lives on the face of the whole earth. Stay alert at all times, praying that you are strong enough to escape everything that is about to happen and to stand before the Human One."

Once while St. Francis of Assisi was hoeing his garden, he was asked, "What would you do if you were suddenly to learn that you were to die at sunset today?" He replied, "I would finish hoeing my garden."

STAND FIRM...and finish hoeing the garden and continue cultivating the heart! STAND FIRM...and tell your heart that your sins are forgiven! STAND FIRM...and finish hoeing and always keep watch! STAND FIRM...and finish hoeing by praying constantly! STAND FIRM...and finish hoeing by doing so, you will be able to stand on that wonderful day. A day when we should bow, but I just bet that we will be so overwhelmed with joy for his coming, and so elated that we leap with joy in his presence!

