

## Luke: 21:12–33

### From Catena Aurea:

12. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

14. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

18. But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

19. In your patience possess ye your souls.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** Or He says this, because before that Jerusalem should be taken by the Romans, the disciples, having suffered persecution from the Jews, were imprisoned and brought before rulers; Paul was sent to Rome to Cæsar, and stood before Festus and Agrippa.

It follows, And it shall turn to you for a testimony. In the Greek it is εἰς μαρτύριον, that is, for the glory of martyrdom.

**THEOPHYLACT.** For because they were foolish and inexperienced, the Lord tells them this, that they might not be confounded when about to give account to the wise. And He adds the cause, For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. As if He said, Ye shall forthwith receive of me eloquence and wisdom, so that all your adversaries, were they gathered together in one, shall not be able to resist you, neither in wisdom, that is, the power of the understanding, nor in eloquence, that is, excellence of speech, for many men have often wisdom in their mind, but being easily

provoked to their great disturbance, mar the whole when their time of speaking comes, But not such were the Apostles, for in both these gifts they were highly favoured.

**AMBROSE.** Now in one place Christ speaks in His disciples, as here; in another, the Father; (Mat. 16:17) in another the Spirit of the Father speaketh. (Mat. 10:20.) These do not differ but agree together, In that one speaketh, three speak, for the voice of the Trinity is one.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Having in what has gone before dispelled the fear of inexperience, He goes on to warn them of another very certain event, which might agitate their minds, lest falling suddenly upon them, it should dismay them; for it follows, And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

**GREGORY OF NYSSA.** But let us consider the state of things at that time. While all men were suspected, kinsfolk were divided against one another, each differing from the other in religion; the gentile son stood up the betrayer of his believing parents, and of his believing son the unbelieving father became the determined accuser; no age was spared in the persecution of the faith; women were unprotected even by the natural weakness of their sex.

**THEOPHYLACT.** To all this He adds the hatred which they shall meet with from all men.

21:20–24

20. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ad Hesych. Ep. 199.) These words of our Lord, Luke has here related to shew, that the abomination of desolation which was prophesied by Daniel, and of which Matthew and Mark had spoken, (Mat. 24, Mark 13.) was fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem.

**AMBROSE.** For the Jews thought that the abomination of desolation took place when the Romans, in mockery of a Jewish observance, cast a pig's head into the temple.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ut sup.) And before this, Matthew and Mark said, And let him that is on the housetop not come down into his house; and Mark added, neither enter therein to take any thing out of his house; in place of which Luke subjoins, And let them which are in the midst of it depart out.

**AUGUSTINE.** (uti sup.) But where Matthew and Mark have written, Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes, Luke adds more clearly, And let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto, for these be the days of vengeance, that all the things which are written may be fulfilled.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ubi sup.) Then Luke follows in words similar to those of the other two; But woe to them that are with child, and them that give suck in those days; and thus has made plain what might otherwise have been doubtful, namely, that what was said of the abomination of desolation belonged not to the end of the world, but the taking of Jerusalem.

**THEOPHYLACT.** But some say that the Lord hereby signified the devouring of children, which Josephus also relates.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (adv. oppug. mon. vit.) He next assigns the cause of what he had just now said, For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. For the miseries that took hold of them were such as, in the words of Josephus, no calamity can henceforth compare to them.

**AMBROSE.** Now mystically, the abomination of desolation is the coming of Antichrist, for with ill-omened sacrilege he pollutes the innermost recesses of the heart, sitting as it is literally in the temple, that he may claim to himself the throne of divine power. But according to the spiritual meaning, he is well brought in, because he desires to impress firmly on the affections the footstep of his unbelief, disputing from the Scriptures that he is Christ. Then shall come desolation, for very many falling away shall depart from the true religion. Then shall be the day of the Lord, since as His first coming was to redeem sin, so also His second shall be to subdue iniquity, lest more should be carried away by the error of unbelief. There is also another Antichrist, that is, the Devil, who is trying to besiege Jerusalem, i. e. the peaceful soul, with the hosts of his law. When then the Devil is in the midst of the temple, there is the desolation of abomination.

But when upon any one in trouble the spiritual presence of Christ has shone, the unjust one is cast out, and righteousness begins her reign. There is also a third Antichrist, as Arius and Sabellius and all who with evil purpose lead us astray. But these are they who are with child, to whom woe is denounced, who enlarge the size of their flesh, and the step of whose inmost soul waxes slow, as those who are worn out in virtue, pregnant with vice. But neither do those with child escape condemnation, who though firm in the resolution of good acts, have not yet yielded any fruits of the work undertaken. These are those which conceive from fear of God, but do not all bring forth. For there are some which thrust forth the word abortive before their delivery. There are others too which have Christ in the womb, but have not yet formed Him. Therefore she who brings forth righteousness, brings forth Christ. Let us also hasten to nourish our children, lest the day of judgment or death find us as it were the parents of an imperfect offspring. And this you will do if you keep all the words of righteousness in your heart, and wait not the time of old age, but in your earliest years, without corruption of your body, quickly conceive wisdom, quickly nourish it. But at the end shall all Judæa be made subject to the nations which shall believe, by the mouth of the spiritual sword, which is the two-edged word. (Rev. 1:16; 19:15.)

21:25–27

25. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

26. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

**AMBROSE.** All which signs are more clearly described in Matthew, Then shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** For as in this world the moon and the stars are soon dimmed by the rising of the sun, so at the glorious appearance of Christ shall the sun become dark, and the moon not shed her ray, and the stars shall fall from heaven, stripped of their former attire, that they may put on the robe of a better light.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Or else, When the higher world shall be changed, then also the lower elements shall suffer loss; whence it follows, And on the earth distress of nations, &c. As if He said, the sea shall roar terribly, and its shores shall be shaken with the tempest, so that of the people and nations of the earth there

shall be distress, that is, a universal misery, so that they shall pine away from fear and expectation of the evils which are coming upon the world.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ad Hes. Ep. 199.) But you will say, your punishment compels you to confess that the end is now approaching, seeing the fulfilment of that which was foretold. For it is certain there is no country, no place in our time, which is not affected or troubled. But if those evils which mankind now suffer are sure signs that our Lord is now about to come, what meaneth that which the Apostle says, For when they shall say peace and safety. (1 Thess. 5:3.) Let us see then if it be not perhaps better to understand the words of prophecy to be not so fulfilled, but rather that they will come to pass when the tribulation of the whole world shall be such that it shall belong to the Church, which shall be troubled by the whole world, not to those who shall trouble it. For they are those who shall say, Peace and safety. But now these evils which are counted the greatest and most immoderate, we see to be common to both the kingdoms of Christ and the Devil. For the good and the evil are alike afflicted with them, and among these great evils is the yet universal resort to licentious feasts. Is not this the being dried up from fear, or rather the being burnt up from lust?

**THEOPHYLACT.** But not only shall men be tossed about when the world shall be changed, but angels even shall stand amazed at the terrible revolutions of the universe. Hence it follows, And the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (ad Olymp. Ep. 2.) Or the heavenly powers shall be shaken, although themselves know it not. For when they see the innumerable multitudes condemned, they shall not stand there without trembling.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ad Hes. ut sup.) But that the Lord may not seem to have foretold as extraordinary those things concerning His second coming, which were wont to happen to this world even before His first coming, and that we may not be laughed at by those who have read more and greater events than these in the history of nations, I think what has been said may be better understood to apply to the Church. For the Church is the sun, the moon, and the stars, to whom it was said, Fair as the moon, elect as the sun. (Cant. 6:10.) And she will then not be seen for the unbounded rage of the persecutors.

**AMBROSE.** While many also fall away from religion, clear faith will be obscured by the cloud of unbelief, for to me that Sun of righteousness is either diminished or increased according to my faith; and as the moon in its monthly wanings, or when it is opposite the sun by the interposition of the earth, suffers eclipse, so also the holy Church when the sins of the flesh oppose the heavenly light, cannot borrow the

brightness of divine light from Christ's rays. For in persecutions, the love of this world generally shuts out the light of the divine Sun; the stars also fall, that is, men who shine in glory fall when the bitterness of persecution waxes sharp and prevails. And this must be until the multitude of the Church be gathered in, for thus are the good tried and the weak made manifest.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ut sup.) But in the words, And upon the earth distress of nations, He would understand by nations, not those which shall be blessed in the seed of Abraham, but those which shall stand on the left hand.

**AMBROSE.** So severe then will be the manifold fires of our souls, that with consciences depraved through the multitude of crimes, by reason of our fear of the coming judgment, the dew of the sacred fountain will be dried upon us. But as the Lord's coming is looked for, in order that His presence may dwell in the whole circle of mankind or the world, which now dwells in each individual who has embraced Christ with his whole heart, so the powers of heaven shall at our Lord's coming obtain an increase of grace, and shall be moved by the fulness of the Divine nature more closely infusing itself. There are also heavenly powers which proclaim the glory of God, which shall be stirred by a fuller infusion of Christ, that they may see Christ.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ut sup.) Or the powers of heaven shall be stirred, because when the ungodly persecute, some of the most stout-hearted believers shall be troubled.

**THEOPHYLACT.** (ut sup.) It follows, And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds. Both the believers and unbelievers shall see Him, for He Himself as well as His cross shall glisten brighter than the sun, and so shall be observed of all.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ut sup.) But the words, coming in the clouds, may be taken in two ways. Either coming in His Church as it were in a cloud, as He now ceases not to come. But then it shall be with great power and majesty, for far greater will His power and might appear to His saints, to whom He will give great virtue, that they may not be overcome in such a fearful persecution. Or in His body in which He sits at His Father's right hand He must rightly be supposed to come, and not only in His body, but also in a cloud, for He will come even as He went away, And a cloud received him out of their sight.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** For God ever appears in a cloud, according to the Psalms, clouds and darkness are round about him. (Ps. 17:11.) Therefore shall the Son of man come in the clouds as God, and the Lord, not secretly, but in glory worthy of God. Therefore He adds, with great power and majesty.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** Great must be understood in like manner. For His first appearance He made in our weakness and lowliness, the second He shall celebrate in all His own power.

21:28–33

28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

30. When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

33. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

**THEOPHYLACT.** That is, perfect liberty of body and soul. For as the first coming of our Lord was for the restoration of our souls, so will the second be manifested unto the restoration of our bodies.

**AMBROSE.** Matthew speaks of the fig-tree only, Luke of all the trees. But the fig-tree shadows forth two things, either the ripening of what is hard, or the luxuriance of sin; that is, either that, when the fruit bursts forth in all trees and the fruitful fig-tree abounds, (that is, when every tongue confesses God, even the Jewish people confessing Him,) we ought to hope for our Lord's coming, in which shall be gathered in as at summer the fruits of the resurrection. Or, when the man of sin shall clothe himself in his light and fickle boasting as it were the leaves of the synagogue, we must then suppose the judgment to be drawing near. For the Lord hastens to reward faith, and to bring an end of sinning.

**AUGUSTINE.** (ut sup.) But when He says, When ye shall see these things to come to pass, what can we understand but those things which were mentioned above. But among them we read, And then shall they see the Son of man coming. When therefore this is seen, the kingdom of God is not yet, but nigh at hand. Or must we say that we are not to understand all the things before mentioned, when He says, When ye shall see these things, &c. but only some of them; this for example being excepted, And then shall they see the Son of man. But Matthew would plainly have it taken with no exception, for he says, And so ye, when ye see all these things, among which is the seeing the coming of the Son of man; in order that it may

be understood of that coming whereby He now comes in His members as in clouds, or in the Church as in a great cloud.

**TITUS BOSTRENSIS.** Or else, He says, the kingdom of God is at hand, meaning that when these things shall be, not yet shall all things come to their last end, but they shall be already tending towards it. For the very coming of our Lord itself, casting out every principality and power, is the preparation for the kingdom of God.

**THEOPHYLACT.** For because He had foretold that there should be commotions, and wars, and changes, both of the elements and in other things, lest any one might suspect that Christianity itself also would perish, He adds, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away: as if He said, Though all things should be shaken, yet shall my faith fail not. Whereby He implies that He sets the Church before the whole creation. The creation shall suffer change, but the Church of the faithful and the words of the Gospel shall abide for ever.

### **From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:**

#### **21:12–19 Persecution before the Temple is Destroyed**

##### **Apostles Will Be Persecuted as a Sign of the Coming Consummation.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus gives them clear and evident signs of the time when the consummation of the world draws near. He says that there will be wars, turmoil, famines and epidemics everywhere. There will be terrors from heaven and great signs. As another Evangelist says, “All the stars shall fall, and the heaven be rolled up like a scroll, and its powers will be shaken.”

In the middle of this, the Savior places what refers to the capture of Jerusalem. He mixes the accounts together in both parts of the narrative. Before all these things, he says, “They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and to prisons and bringing you before kings and rulers for my name’s sake. This will be a witness to you.” Before the times of consummation, the land of the Jews was taken captive, and the Roman armies overran it. They burned the temple, overthrew their national government, and stopped the means for legal worship. They no longer had sacrifices, now that the temple was destroyed. The country of the Jews together with Jerusalem itself was totally laid waste.



Before these things happened, they persecuted the blessed disciples. They imprisoned them and had a part in unendurable trials. They brought the disciples before judges and sent them to kings. Paul was sent to Rome to Caesar....

Christ promises, however, that he will deliver them certainly and completely. He says that a hair of your head will not perish. Commentary on Luke, Homily 139.

### **Christ Reassures His Martyrs.**

Augustine: Death comes to either the soul or the body. The soul cannot die, and yet it can die. It cannot die, because its consciousness is never lost. It can die, if it loses God. You see, just as the soul itself is the life of the body, so in the same way God is the life of the soul. As the body dies when the soul that is its life abandons it, in the same way when God abandons the soul, it dies. To make sure, however, that God does not abandon the soul, it must always have enough faith not to fear death for God's sake. Then God does not abandon it, and it does not die.

It remains that the death that is feared is feared for the body. Even on this point, the Lord Christ reassured his martyrs. After all, how could they be unsure of the integrity of their bodies, when they had been reassured about the number of their hairs? "He said that your hairs have all been counted." In another place he says even more plainly, "For I tell you, that not a hair of your head shall perish." Truth speaks. Does weakness hesitate? Sermon 273.1.

### **The Faithful Christian Recognized by Belief in Resurrection of the Body.**

Augustine: We should have no doubt that our mortal flesh also will rise again at the end of the world... This is the Christian faith. This is the Catholic faith. This is the apostolic faith. Believe Christ when he says, "Not a hair of your head shall perish." Putting aside all unbelief, consider how valuable you are. How can our Redeemer despise any person when he cannot despise a hair of that person's head? How are we going to doubt that he intends to give eternal life to our soul and body? He took on a soul and body in which to die for us, which he laid down for us when he died and which he took up again that we might not fear death. Sermon 214.11–12.

## **21:20–24 The Destruction of Jerusalem**

A Sign of the Final Consummation.

Cyril of Alexandria: To make his prediction even clearer and to mark more plainly the time of its capture, Jesus says, “When you have seen Jerusalem surrounded with armies, then know that its destruction is near.” Afterwards, he again transfers his words from this subject to the time of the consummation. He says, “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” Since creation begins to be changed and brings unendurable terrors on the inhabitants of earth, there will be a certain fearful tribulation. There will also be souls departing to death. The unendurable fear of those things that are coming will be sufficient for the destruction of many. Commentary on Luke, Homily 139.

### **Woe to Pregnant Women.**

Ambrose: Woe to those pregnant women, because they are heavy in body; they are too slow to escape danger. Woe to those for whom the yet unfelt pangs of future birth, by which every body is shaken, are the signs of future judgment, the beginnings of sorrows. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 10.26.

### **The Signs Have Been Accomplished.**

Augustine: The signs given in the Gospel and in prophecy and fulfilled in us show the coming of the Lord... We know that the coming is near by the fact that we see the fulfillment of certain signs of that coming that have been accomplished... The signs that Christ told them to look for are listed in the Gospel of Saint Luke: “Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the nations are fulfilled.” This has happened and no one doubts that it has happened... It is plain that there is no country or place in our time that is not harassed or humbled according to the words “for fear and expectation of what will come on the whole world.” All the signs that the gospel describes in the earlier verses have mostly been accomplished. Letter 198.

Luke Refers to the Destruction of Jerusalem.

Augustine: Anyone can see that he refers to that city when Christ says, "When you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by an army, then know that its desolation is near." Anyone can see that these words refer to the last coming of the Lord when he says, "When you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is near." When he says, "Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be." This passage is phrased in this way in Matthew and Mark so that it is uncertain whether it is to be understood of the destruction of the city or of the end of the world.... Luke has so arranged it that it seems to refer to the destruction of that city. Letter 199.

### **21:25–26 Signs in Heaven and Earth**

#### **Signs in the Heavens When People Fall into Unbelief.**

Ambrose: This is a true sequence of prophecy and a fresh cause of mystery, because the Jews will be led captive a second time to Babylon and Assyria. Those throughout the world who have denied Christ will be captive. A hostile army will trample visible Jerusalem as the sword kills Jews. All Judea will be put to the spiritual sword, the two-edged sword, by the nations that will believe. There will be different signs in the sun, moon and the stars. ... When very many fall away from religion, a cloud of unbelief will darken bright faith, because for me that heavenly Sun is either diminished or increased by my faith. If very many gaze on the rays of the worldly sun, the sun seems bright or pale in proportion to the capacity of the viewer, so the spiritual light is imparted to each according to the devotion of the believer. In its monthly courses, the moon, opposite the earth, wanes when it is in the sun's quarter. When the vices of the flesh obstruct the heavenly Light, the holy church also cannot borrow the brightness of the divine Light from the rays of Christ. In the persecutions, love of this life alone certainly very often shuts out the light of God. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 10.36–37.

## **21:27–36 The Coming of the Son of Man**

### **Christ Comes in a Cloud to Cover the Heavenly Mystery.**

Ambrose: You see him in the clouds. I certainly do not think that Christ will come in the darkness of mist and the chill of rain. The clouds are visible and surely cover the heaven in foggy cold. How has he set his tabernacle in the sun if his coming brings the rain? Some clouds suitably cover the radiance of the heavenly mystery. Some clouds grow moist with the dew of spiritual grace. Consider the cloud in the Old Testament. “He spoke to them,” it says, “in a pillar of cloud.” ... He comes in a calm cloud in the Song of Songs, shining with the joy of a bridegroom. He also comes in a swift light cloud, incarnate of the Virgin. The prophet saw him as a cloud coming from the east. He fittingly said, “a light cloud,” that earthly vices would not weigh down. See the cloud upon which the Holy Spirit came and the power of the Most High overshadowed. When Christ will appear in the clouds, the tribes of the earth will grieve over themselves. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 10.41–43.

### **We Shall See His Crucified and Risen Body.**

Augustine: “Then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty.” As I see it, this could be taken in two ways. One way is that he will come in the church as in a cloud. He continues to come in this way according to his word, “Hereafter you will see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” He comes with great power and majesty because his greater power and majesty will appear in the saints to whom he will give great power, so that persecution might not overcome them. The other way in which he will come will be in his body in which he sits at the right hand of the Father. In this body, he died, rose again, and ascended into heaven. It is written in the Acts of the Apostles: “When he had said these things, a cloud received him and he was taken up from their sight.” The angels then said, “He shall so come as you have seen him going away.” We have reason to believe that he will come not only in the same body but also in a cloud since he will come as he left, and a cloud received him as he went. Letter 199.

### **Our Bodies Shall Be Made Glorious.**

Cyril of Alexandria: He says that they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Christ will not come secretly or obscurely but as God and Lord in glory suitable for deity. He will transform all things for the better. He will renew creation and refashion the nature of people to what it was at the

beginning. He said, "When these things come to pass, lift up your heads and look upward, for your redemption is near." The dead will rise. This earthly and infirm body will put off corruption and will clothe itself with incorruption by Christ's gift. He grants those that believe in him to be conformed to the likeness of his glorious body. Commentary on Luke, Homily 139.

### **Dreadful Human Suffering.**

Augustine: You say that our very suffering forces us to admit that the end is at hand when there is a fulfillment of what was foretold: "men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world." You say, "It is plain that there is no country or place in our time that is not harassed or humbled according to the words 'for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world.'" If the evils that the human race now suffers are clear signs that the Lord is about to come now, what becomes of the apostle's words: "When they shall say, 'Peace and security' "? When the Gospel said, "men withering away for fear and expectation," it immediately continued, "For the powers of heaven shall be moved. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty." Letter 199.36.

The Fig Tree is a Sign of Faith and a Sign of Unbelief.

Ambrose: The fig tree therefore has a double meaning: when the wild is tamed or when sins abound. Like the believer's faith that shriveled up before it will flower, so also sinners will glory through the grace of their transgressions. On the one hand is the fruit of faith, and on the other the lewdness of unbelief. The gardening of the Evangelist as farmer produces the fruit of the fig tree for me. We must not despair if sinners cover themselves with the leaves of the fig tree as with a garment of deceit, so that they may veil their conscience. Leaves without fruit are therefore suspicious. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 45.

### **Adversity a Sign that the Kingdom is at Hand.**

Cyprian: Beloved brothers and sisters, whoever serves as a soldier of God stationed in the camp of heaven already hopes for the divine things. He should recognize himself so that we should have no fear or dread at the storms and whirlwinds of the world. Through the encouragement of his provident voice, the Lord predicted that these things would come when he was instructing, teaching, preparing and strengthening the people of his church to endure everything to come. Christ foretold and prophesied that wars, famine, earthquakes and epidemics would arise in the various places. So that an unexpected and new fear of

destructive agencies might not shake us, he forewarned that adversity would increase in the last times. Note that the things that were spoken of are happening. Since the things that were foretold are happening, whatever he promises will also follow. The Lord himself promises, "When you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand." The kingdom of God, beloved brothers and sisters, has drawn near. The reward of life, the joy of eternal salvation, the perpetual happiness and the possession of paradise once lost are now coming as the world passes away. On Mortality 2.

### **Drunkenness Weakens Soul and Body.**

Origen: "But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare." You heard the proclamation of the eternal King. You learned the deplorable end of "drunkenness" or "intoxication." Imagine a skilled and wise physician who would say, "Beware, no one should drink too much from this or that herb. If he does, he will suddenly be destroyed." I do not doubt that everyone would keep the prescriptions of the physician's warning concerning his own health. Now the Lord, who is both the physician of souls and bodies, orders them to avoid as a deadly drink the herb "of drunkenness" and the vice "of intoxication" and also the care of worldly matters. I do not know if any one can say that he is not wounded, because these things consume him.

Drunkenness is therefore destructive in all things. It is the only thing that weakens the soul together with the body. According to the apostle, it can happen that when the body "is weak," then the spirit is "much stronger," and when "the exterior person is destroyed, the interior person is renewed." In the illness of drunkenness, the body and the soul are destroyed at the same time. The spirit is corrupted equally with the flesh. All the members are weakened: the feet and the hands. The tongue is loosened. Darkness covers the eyes. Forgetfulness covers the mind so that one does not know himself nor does he perceive he is a person. Drunkenness of the body has that shamefulfulness. Homilies on Leviticus 7.5–6.