



“St. John the Baptist”, a polychromed wood sculpture by Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439-1502) in 1464, now at Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena. © Web Gallery of Art. “His clothes were woven from camel hair, and he wore a leather belt,” we’ll hear on Sunday, as John announced, “Someone is coming soon who is far greater than I am.”

Do You Believe That Jesus Christ Will Return to Earth Again?

“The question of *when* Jesus will return is not the most important question,” the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday on the portion of Mark’s Gospel which he said is known as Mark’s “Little Apocalypse”.

Just as Jesus’ disciples were naturally curious about when Jesus would return, “we tend to focus our attention in the same direction that they focused theirs. We know that Jesus will return again. The primary question on our collective lips, however, is, ‘*When* will Jesus come?’ ”

In light of the fact that Jesus told his disciples that he didn’t know when he would return, “the question of *when* Jesus will return is not the most important question. The question I want to pose to you this morning is not centered around the *time* of Jesus’ return. The question I want to pose to you this morning centers around the *fact* of his return.

“Now it might seem ludicrous for me to ask a group of believers gathered in church this question, but I need to ask it nonetheless: *Do you believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth again?* Are you firmly convinced in your mind and heart that he will arrive on the clouds with great glory, as the biblical images suggest?”

That question is not a rhetorical question. I do not ask it merely to occupy time in the sermon this morning. It is not meant as a diversion from the central thrust of the sermon. The question *is* the central thrust of the sermon. And, the question is not addressed to ‘current resident’ or ‘current occupant’. The question is spoken directly to you, and to me. *Do you—do I—believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth again?*

“When I was about Davis’ age, my mom came to me one day and said, ‘I am going out to run errands. While I am gone, I want you to pick up your dirty clothes and put them in the laundry, I want you to pick up your things from the staircase, and I want you to do the dirty dishes in the sink for me.’ ”

“As she walked toward the door, I said, ‘Mom, how long will you be gone?’ Mom replied, ‘I don’t know.’ I said, ‘Mom, when will you be back?’ Again, I heard, ‘I don’t know.’ Mom made it very clear to me, though, that she wanted those tasks completed before she returned home.”

Pastor Thelander said he tried to calculate how long it would take his mother to complete her errands, but “it became clear to me in those moments that *when* Mom was returning was far less important than the fact that (p. 2→)

Editor: Box 972, Boise, ID 83701. 208-336-3951, harbingermail@aol.com

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander, epworthrector@msn.com

On the Web: www.epworthchapelonthegreen.org

Sundays, 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

Sundays, 11:45 a.m.: Moderated post-service discussion

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.: Advent Evening Prayers

For the poor (updated list): Fresh potatoes, paper plates, plastic silverware and napkin sets, turkeys, hams, canned yams, sweet potatoes, corn, green beans, cranberry sauce, ready-to-serve rolls, butter or margarine in 1-lb. tubs, stuffing mix, disposable salt/pepper shakers, frozen pies, onions, cake/dessert mixes, tamale-making ingredients: pork cushion meat, masa corn meal.

Readings, 12/7: Is. 40:1-11; Ps. 85:7-13; 2 Peter 3:8-16; Mark 1:1-8. **12/14, 10 a.m.:** Is. 65:17-25; Ps. 126; 1 Thess. 5:12-28; John 1:6-8, 19-28. **12/14, 6 p.m., Lessons & Carols:** Is. 40:1-8; Jer. 23:5-6; Is. 11:1-9; Micah 5:2-5; Zech. 9:9-10; Is. 35:1-10; Is. 7:10-15; Jer. 31:31-34; Luke 1:26-38.

Prayer Emphases: Turkmenistan; Advent Christian Church; Shandon Baptist Church, Columbia, SC, and the Rev. Dick Lincoln; Firm Foundation Ministries; parishioners on Covina Circle.

(Sermon, cont’d.) there were . . . (t)hings (that) needed to be done . . . (As) I set about doing those tasks . . . (t)here was a shift in my attitude . . . Fear had given way to anticipation.” “The relevant question as we enter Advent is not, ‘When is he coming?’ . . . (but), ‘What should we be doing when he comes?’ ” The answer, he said, is to pursue justice, pray and labor for peace, reconcile relationships, end addiction and violence, and bring healing and hope.