

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

### THE HOUR IS NEAR – PART I

Romans 13:11 “The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”

In the Apostle's Creed you confess that you believe that Jesus will return to Judge the living and the dead. This moment is commonly referred to as Judgement Day. The Greek word for this moment is Parousia, which means the time when time will be no more. For the next several days these devotions will focus upon this day or as St. Paul refers to it in verse 11 as “the hour.”

According to a recent PEW poll, over 70% of Americans believe there is a heaven and over 60% believe there is a hell. According to that same poll, 39% believe we are living in the last “hour” or the last years of the earth's existence. This 39% believe Christ will return in the next 40 years. Jesus said regarding knowing when this day will come, “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” (Matthew 24:36-39)

The Scriptures say, “. . . the time is short . . . for this world in its present form is passing away.” (1 Corinthians 7:29,31) And, Peter exhorts, “. . . be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near . . . the judge is standing at the door!” (1 Peter 4:5) St. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 “. . . you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” Peter says, on that day all people will “. . . give account to Him (Jesus) who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” This we confess in the Apostle's Creed.

*Tomorrow you will read part II of this devotion!*

Prayer: LORD, through your Word and the Sacraments prepare me for the “hour” when Jesus shall return as Judge of the living and the dead. In His name. Amen.

Wake, awake, for night is flying," The watchmen on the heights are crying;  
"Awake, Jerusalem, arise!" Midnight hears the welcome voices  
And at the thrilling cry rejoices; "Oh, where are ye, ye virgins wise?  
The Bridegroom comes, awake! Your lamps with gladness take!  
Alleluia! With bridal care Yourselves prepare  
To meet the Bridegroom, who is near."

Zion hears the watchmen singing, And all her heart with joy is springing;  
She wakes, she rises from her gloom. For her Lord comes down all-glorious,  
The strong in grace, in truth victorious; Her star is ris'n, her light is come.  
Now come, Thou Blessed One, Lord Jesus, God's own Son,  
Hail Hosanna! We enter all The wedding hall To eat the Supper at Thy call.

Now let all the heav'ns adore Thee, Let saints and angels sing before Thee  
With harp and cymbals' clearest tone Of one pearl each shining portal,  
Where, joining with the choir immortal, We gather round Thy radiant throne  
No eye has seen the light, No ear has heard the might Of Thy glory;  
Therefore will we Eternally Sing hymns of praise and joy to Thee!  
(LSB 516)