

WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

## Read: Revelation 11

*'Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God.'* **Revelation 11:16**

Chapter 11 of the Book of Revelation assures those who are going through persecution for their faith that they will continue to remain protected. Jesus at His Second Coming will destroy evil, removing Satan from this world forever. God revealed to John during his exile in Patmos that Jesus is coming back as the king to judge the world and establish a just and righteous kingdom forever.

This revelation came at the time when seven churches in Asia were undergoing severe persecution from Emperor Domitian (A.D. 90-95). This reminds us that Church is built on the foundation of suffering and persecuted Christians.

This book offers comfort to the believers who are persecuted for their faith in different parts of the world today. A Christian from Pakistan had composed a beautiful song in Urdu based on verses 15-19 of chapter 11. He writes, "My home is in heaven - This sinful land and sinful world is not my home." There is steady growth of Christianity in the countries where Christians are persecuted.

In verse 16, the twenty-four elders represent the twelve tribes of the Old Testament and twelve apostles in the New Testament. In the Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ both Old and New Testaments are summed up. Jesus offers hope to all believers from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. In God's family, all are welcomed. Like these 24 elders, every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and so we're reminded this Advent of our call to proclaim God's saving plan for everyone.

The world will ultimately glorify Jesus (v.13). Advent offers a huge confidence to the Church in our time to believe and serve Jesus. We must robustly engage in preparing our communities to be holy and worthy to receive Jesus when He comes again. We are called to surrender our life in humility to Jesus, the ultimate king. Our Advent Prayer is "Maranatha" - Come, Lord and take charge of this world. Amen.

**The Revd Dr Sarah Siddique Gill, Vicar of United Benefice of St Stephen's with St. James', Blackburn.**