

Judge Robert Bork was in Kansas City this week. He met with the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association and autographed copies of his new book. Ever since his failed nomination to the Supreme Court he has become a public figure, and people recognize him wherever he goes. He told a story I thought was funny. He said he stopped recently outside a Chicago bookstore and a woman on the street paused to look more closely at him. Then she came up to him and said something that Bork says he hears frequently. "Sir," she said to him, "I just want you to know that we are heeding your warnings." "What warnings?" Bork asked. "Well, you are the surgeon general, aren't you?" He said it was all the more strange because he was smoking a cigarette at the time."

Advent is a season of warnings. There are more warnings in today's readings than C. Everett Koop has written in his life. Advent tells us to be prepared because the Son of Man will come at the time you least expect him.

This year Advent comes at a moment in history when the whole world is in revolution. There are warnings in the Philippines, warnings in India, warnings in China, in Czechoslovakia, in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Panama, and Nicaragua. Political analysts are saying they can't remember a year as dramatic as 1989. This year will be etched in history books. The Vatican archivist says there's been no year like this since the French Revolution in 1789. George Will says there's been no year like this since the Protestant Reformation in 1517. Events the world over signal a call to renewal and urge us to join the efforts for freedom and peace. In the thick of this energy comes Advent 1989.

Be prepared! The United States may be caught watching while the world changes. In the days of Noah, Jesus reminds us, people were so concerned with everyday activities they missed the warnings and lost everything in the flood. If we focus our attention on the wrong places we will not be prepared. The opening of the borders in Eastern Europe has happened without the CIA, without US arms, and without congress. Compare that to the stillborn revolutions of Central America and you can wonder if we are prepared to achieve world goals.

Isaiah's prophecy announces the goal for us. He says one day Jerusalem will sit on the tallest mountain of Judah. As it was then--and still is now--Jerusalem actually sits on a runt of a hill surrounded by mountains much mightier. But one day, he says, people will look up to Jerusalem; they will climb to Jerusalem because from Jerusalem will come instruction and judgment. And people will ^{be} ~~be so moved by what they hear~~ they will beat swords into plowshares and never train for war again. Jerusalem will be ready because Jerusalem has received the Lord.

This is our Advent goal--to receive the Lord, to be prepared at all times to receive the Lord. Then we shall be raised as the highest hill and people will stream to us for instruction and judgment. We will be prepared if we let not this year pass us by. The revolutions of the world demand a revolution in our heart. If we prepare in our hearts a cradle for the coming of Christ, we will be a place for the proliferation of peace.