

BIBLE STUDY
November 25, 2019

The First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2: 1-5

Matthew 24: 37-44

Romans 13: 11-14

1. Advent:

- Four weeks of preparation to celebrate the birth of the Lord at Christmas.
- We remember the three comings of Christ: his first coming as a baby in Bethlehem; the ways in which he comes into our lives each day through Word, Sacrament, people, those in need; his Second Coming in glory as Judge.
- Advent is different from Lent. It is not primarily penitential, but rather joyful expectation. Its mood is preparation for the coming of a welcome guest.
- First Sunday: Second Coming; Second Sunday: John the Baptist; Third Sunday: Rejoice the Lord is near! Fourth Sunday: Mary and Joseph
- December 17-24: Heightened expectation

2. Isaiah 2: 1-5

- Isaiah is one of the four major prophets along with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
- Isaiah is the prophet who foretells the coming of the Savior; that he will be the Servant of the Lord; that there will come a day when the Lord will make all things right—the desert will bloom.
- First Isaiah: 1-39; Second Isaiah: 40-55; Third Isaiah: 56-66
- This oracle: God is the universal King. Zion is his chosen place to dwell. It is the place of his special protection. It is the goal of pilgrimage of the nations. From it will flow peace and the destruction of weapons.
- These themes are also found in Psalms 46, 48, 76, 87.
- The nations seek instruction on the moral way to live and God's ways are recognized as the right ways.
- The difference between the present and this future is that now even Israel disobeys the Lord but in the future all nations will obey him.
- It concludes with an exhortation to begin now to walk in the light of the Lord.

3. Matthew 24: 37-44

- Eschatology: concern about the last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell.
- Matthew's community is trying to understand the delay of the Lord's coming. At first, it was expected to be any day. Faced with delay, Matthew insists on the certainty that it will happen and faced with our inability to know exactly when it will happen, the need for constant vigilance and readiness.
- "as it was in the days of Noah:" People did not know the flood was coming except for Noah and his family. The others were not ready. In the same

way, we do not know when the Son of man will come, so we must be always ready.

- “they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage:” like was going on as normal. People were engaged in routine, everyday activities. Do not let the “normalcy” of present times make you slack off in vigilance.
- “two will be out in the field; one will be taken, one will be left:” There will be a judgement that will separate people one from another. Taken (into the Kingdom). Left (for punishment). Also, suggests that everyone has their time. In the face of unexpected and sudden death, people ask, “Why him/her? Why not me? It was not your time.
- “Stay awake:” Be always on watch. Treat every day as if it were the last day. Always be ready to meet your Lord.
- We do not know when the Lord will return. Don’t try to calculate it for figure it out. Most importantly, don’t be fooled into thinking it will never come or that you will have enough time to prepare.
- Parable of the thief in the night: If you know, you will be broken into; you will take action to prevent it. You know the Lord will return, take action now so that you will be prepared.
- The Son of Man will return when you do not expect him.

4. Romans 13: 11-14

- Readiness for the Lord. You know what time it is. Wake up! Be ready!
- Salvation is nearer: Time marches on and waits for no one. Any delay means that you are losing time and opportunity for change.
- Night is advanced; day is at hand. Dawn is imminent.
- Works of darkness/armor of light: Ancient moralists used to say that people doing evil could hardly wait for the night, so they could begin sinning.
- Paul says throw off those deeds that belong to darkness and embrace the light with its armor/protection.
- Orgies, drunkenness, promiscuity, licentiousness, rivalry and jealousy belong to the darkness
- Put on the Lord Jesus Christ: baptismal language. In baptism, we take off the old person and put on the new person who is Jesus Christ.
- Concentrate fully on Jesus and do not even consider the flesh.
- Images of light and darkness suggest to us the lack of light and abundance of darkness during this season. Jesus is the Light who shatters our darkness.