

BIBLE STUDY
November 26, 2018

The First Sunday of Advent
December 2, 2018

1. Lectionary

- Common Lectionary: Catholic, Anglican(Episcopal), Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist
- Three Cycles (A) Matthew (B) Mark and John (C) Luke
- First Reading from OT-same theme as Gospel
- Second Reading from letter of NT-read sequentially during Ordinary Time and according to theme otherwise

2. Advent

- Four week of preparation before Christmas: Joyful expectation and watchfulness-not penitential like Lent
- First Sunday: Second Coming of Christ
- Second Sunday: John the Baptist
- Third Sunday: Rejoice! He is near! (Gaudete)
- Fourth Sunday: Mary/Joseph
- December 17-23 More intense preparation for Christmas
- "O" Antiphons: Wisdom, Leader of the Nations, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Radiant Dawn, King of the Nations, Emmanuel

3. First reading: Jeremiah 33: 14-16

- Jeremiah: one of the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel)
- Jeremiah: 650 BC to 587 BC. Prophet during the reigns of several weak kings (Manasseh, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah) and one strong king (Josiah). The nation was always under the threat of foreign powers (Assyria, Babylon and Egypt). Jeremiah preached about the coming destruction but he was not listened to. He called for reform of life and not just superstitious reliance on the Temple. He suffered personal turmoil because of his persecution. He asked why things were so bad for him if he was doing what God asked of him. He also preached about better days to come and a vision of hope and consolation from which this week's selection comes.(Oracles of the Restoration of Israel and Judah 30:1-35:19)
- Despite unfaithfulness of the people, God is faithful to his promise to David. The hope of a king who would be a true heir of David. The leader/king/messiah will be like new growth on an old tree. "He shall do what is right and just in the land."

4. Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3: 12-4:2

- Paul's second missionary journey accompanied by Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy brought him through town and cities in Greece, Philippi,

Thessalonica, Beroea, and Athens. He was persecuted by Jews and Gentiles all through his journey. He sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to check on the church there. Timothy returned to Paul with news of the community in Thessalonica. This letter is Paul's response to what he has heard from Timothy. It is the first written letter of Paul. Although Paul is very thankful that the Thessalonians have persevered in their faith, he is also concerned that they not be disheartened by the persecutions that Paul was facing. He also did not want them to be lead astray for other preachers.

- This selection comes from the second part of the letter which is an exhortation to live the Christian life fully. Their relationship with Christ should be evident in their relationships with one another.

5. Gospel : Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

- The early Christians (including Mark and his community) believed that the Lord would return in glory during their lifetimes. Luke and his community have begun to accommodate themselves that the second coming ~~is~~ was delayed. Throughout his Gospel, Luke emphasizes the following of Christ in daily life over a long period of time. In chapter 21, Luke emphasizes that we do not know when the Lord will return. Those who say that they are the Messiah who has returned or that "the time is now" are false teachers. He tells us not to be terrified when we hear of wars, insurrections, earthquakes, famines, and plagues. They are not the signs of the end. Christians will be persecuted for their belief in Jesus, but they should not fear God will take care of them. They will be saved by perseverance. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD is the time of the Gentiles, not a sign of the end time.

The signs of the coming of the Lord in glory are the apocalyptic signs spoken of in Daniel. They are not literal or historical but symbolic of the great power of God the Creator who can transform creation. Those who have not believed will be in terror and afraid but those who believe will "stand erect and raise their heads" because they know that their "redemption is at hand."

The message of this passage is to persevere and not be lead astray by false teachings about the end time. If you believe, it will be your time of redemption.

34-36: The response of Christians as they wait for the return of the Lord should be one of watchfulness and vigilance. Do not become complacent. Do not give in to the ways of the world—drowsiness, carousing and drunkenness. Do not let the anxieties of daily life throw you off guard. The day of the Lord will catch you by surprise like a trap.

Be vigilant, pray for strength---deliver us from evil---do not be caught up in the tribulations of the world. Get yourself ready to stand before the Lord. Be ready for judgement. Be ready to give an accounting of your life.

6. Questions

- What impresses you about the readings? What stands out for you? Why?
- Which of the three readings makes the greatest impression on you? Why?
- What does the second coming of Christ mean for you? What impact does your belief in Jesus' return in glory have on your daily life?
- During the Advent season, we are mindful of the three comings of Christ: his historical birth in Bethlehem, his coming to us in daily life in the Scripture, the Eucharist, the poor and the needy, wherever two or three are gathered together. Does this influence how you think about Christ's second coming?
- How do these readings help you to begin to think about preparing for Christmas and the celebration of Jesus' birth?