

First Sunday in Advent November 27, 2016

LUTHERAN

## LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.  
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the  
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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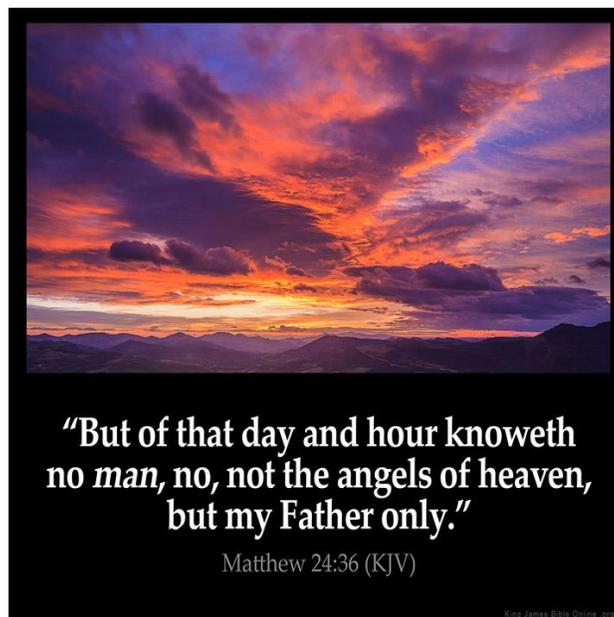
**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,  
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

November 24, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship midweek service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, a new formed assisted living site and used in by Lutherans in Africa.*

*E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.*



<https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-24-36/>

**Hymn of the Day**

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 332 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 95**

**“Savior of the nations, come”**

Trivia question – why are the LSB Advent hymns in the 300’s and the TLH hymns in the 90’s?

This hymn was translated by Martin Luther, but written by Saint Ambrose.

“ Saint Ambrose (339-397) was the first person to successfully introduce to the Western Church the practice of singing metrical hymns. His story is all the more interesting because he was one of the great leaders in church history and a writer of hymns, some of which remain in use today, 1600 years after his death...” Read this article from Vincent A. Lenti at:

<http://www.hymnary.org/files/articles/Lenti,%20Saint%20Ambrose,%20the%20Father%20of%20Western%20Hymnody.pdf> or an additional biography at <http://www.hymnary.org/person/Ambrose>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vztX2ikWkN0> “Chorale prelude by JS Bach and Johann Walther on hymn tune Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland. Mark Peters playing the Buck pipe organ at Trinity Lutheran, Traverse City, MI” [One LSB Hymn a Week](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0jO8e8pkw> Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan; German version, Martin Luther; tr. William M. Reynolds, sts. 1-2; tr. Lutheran Service Book, sts. 3,6; tr. F. Samuel Janzow, sts. 4-5,8; tr. Gifford A. Grobrien, st. 7; sts. 1-2: Public Domain; sts. 4-5, 8: © 1978 Concordia Publishing House; sts. 3, 6-7: © 2006 Concordia Publishing House [LutheranWarbler](#)

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**Isaiah 2:1-5; RCL (Revised Common Lectionary), the same reading (Next Week: Isaiah 11:1-10; RCL, the same reading) The first reading will be from Isaiah through January 22.**

*“The First Readings for Advent, Year A, provide particularly rich visual gifts.*

*On all four Sundays these readings come from the book of Isaiah, and each reading is filled with visual images that could shape our preaching. Even if you don’t follow the lectionary these texts from Isaiah are still worth considering...” (continued after reading)*

## **The Mountain of the LORD**

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,

<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,<sup>[a]</sup>  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.

<sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob,  
come, let us walk  
in the light of the LORD.

a. [Isaiah 2:3](#) Or teaching

“...You probably know that I borrowed this title from Isaiah 2 that begins: “The word that Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.” We don’t talk that way. We would say, “The word that Isaiah, son of Amoz heard...”

What does it mean to see a word? I doubt that this was an early reference to texting or tweeting! I encourage you to consider preaching on the Isaiah texts through the season of Advent. Help people see the words of Isaiah. Some may consider projecting visual images on the screen.

If you’ve sworn never to put a screen in the sanctuary, consider a bulletin cover with a picture of each Isaiah text. Or do what we often do for children’s sermons -- set an object in the middle of the aisle or in front of the communion table or in the narthex. *What’s this plow doing here?* (Isaiah 2) *Who left this stump in the narthex?* (Isaiah 11) *Is that supposed to be a blue river flowing up the center aisle?* (Isaiah 35) *Who put the baby crib in front of the altar?* (Isaiah 7)... “The word that Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.” In chapter 1 Isaiah graphically laid out what he had seen: violence, bribery, unfaithfulness, desolation, trampling on the poor. There are brief interruptions as God calls for repentance and offers glimpses of hope, but they are drowned out by these pictures of violence and rebellion.

Then Chapter 2 opens as though Isaiah is starting all over again -- or God is. What Isaiah sees is not taking place now, but “in the days to come.” People of every nation will stream to Mt. Zion, including those who were enemies of Israel and Judah. God’s instruction will go forth from Jerusalem; God will judge between the nations. The people will be transformed by this teaching. Can you see it?

they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.

Who can believe that? Isaiah’s words are carved into the wall across from the United Nations building. Who believes these words across the street in the General Assembly as they debate sanctions against Iran, as they wring their hands over 100,000 killed in Syria, and chastise the United States for inhumane treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo?...

...We need to remind people that Isaiah was a realist. His pictures in Chapter 1 are as graphic as the evening news:

Your country lies desolate,  
your cities are burned with fire...Benghazi  
And daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard,  
like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. Aleppo  
Everyone loves a bribe  
and runs after gifts. Congress  
They do not defend the orphan,  
and the widow's cause does not come before them. The Sequester

*Isaiah isn't naïve.* He is not a Pollyanna prophet. This vision of weapons of war turned into agricultural tools, images of death-dealing turned into food-producing is a promise for "the days to come." But biblical visions in both testaments come to us from the future, longing to shape the days in which we are living...."

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1896](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1896) [Barbara Lundblad](#)  
*Joe R. Engle Professor Emeritus of Preaching, Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY*

### **Psalm 122; RCL, Psalm, the same Psalm (Psalm 72:1-7; RCL, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19)**

*"The psalm begins with an iconic, inspirational "poster verse" that in our day will likely be heard as referring to the Sunday morning worship high experienced by those who are feeling especially close to God, their communities, or both.*

*This gladness is faithful to the sense of the psalm and is something to be celebrated! But worship is only one aspect of the gladness to which the psalm refers. As the psalm speaks about all the glad happenings up there on the mountaintop, it aptly shifts connotations among worship, justice, homecoming, sanctuary (in the sense of safe refuge), and peace..."*

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1887](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1887) [Henry Langknecht](#)  
Associate Professor of Homiletics, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH

## **Let Us Go to the House of the LORD**

### *A Song of Ascents. Of David.*

122 I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the LORD!"  
<sup>2</sup> Our feet have been standing  
within your gates, O Jerusalem!

<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem—built as a city  
that is bound firmly together,  
<sup>4</sup> to which the tribes go up,  
the tribes of the LORD,  
as was decreed for<sup>[a]</sup> Israel,  
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> There thrones for judgment were set,  
the thrones of the house of David.

<sup>6</sup> Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!  
“May they be secure who love you!

<sup>7</sup> Peace be within your walls  
and security within your towers!”

<sup>8</sup> For my brothers and companions' sake  
I will say, “Peace be within you!”

<sup>9</sup> For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your good.

a. [Psalm 122:4](#) Or as a testimony for

“Psalm 122 is a perfect psalm for the beginning of a new church year on this First Sunday of Advent...

...The companion texts for this First Sunday of Advent likewise herald the invitation as we hear from the prophet Isaiah: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of Jacob" (Isaiah 2:2). Here on the mountain the message of peace is proclaimed and taught. Here the prophet heralds the word that calls for the beginning of a new era of swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, and nations not waging warfare (Isaiah 2:3-4)...

...As we return to Psalm 122, we hear the call of the psalmist in context of these remarkable companion texts for the First Sunday of Advent. We hear this psalm in light of the assurance that our feet are also firmly placed in the ancient gates of Jerusalem, in the faith of the people then, and for us; we are invited to know the dwelling place of God's presence (verse 2)...

..."Let us go to the house of the Lord" (verse 1). In this word of invitation we, too, come to the house of the Lord expectantly waiting the one who is present and will come as Lord of all."

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=773](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=773) [Paul S. Berge](#)  
Emeritus Professor of New Testament, *Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.*

**Romans 13:(8-10), 11-14; RCL, Romans 13:11-14** (*Romans 15:4-13; RCL, the same reading*)

*"In the first part of Romans 13, Paul addresses what those in the Christian community owe the civil authorities.*

*He writes, "Pay to all what is due them -- taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due" (Romans 13:7, NET).*

*Many readers of Paul's letters worry that the first half of this chapter can be easily appropriated by corrupt governments or misguided clergy to silence Christians who might otherwise courageously, faithfully resist systemic evil. In fact, the text has been used in this way. The ease with which Romans 13:1-7 is misunderstood may explain its absence from the Revised Common Lectionary..."*

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1061](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1061) [Mary Hinkle Shore](#) Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Brevard, N.C.

## Fulfilling the Law Through Love

<sup>8</sup> Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup> For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

“...Here in the second paragraph of chapter 13, Paul is more explicit about love. Why does Paul say here that the one who loves his/her neighbor keeps the whole law when he has already said that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for those who believe (Romans 10:4)? Although Christ is the culmination of the law, and though Paul considers his readers as not under Mosaic law, he still is concerned that they live moral lives (Romans 6:14-15), fulfilling a natural law that he elsewhere in this letter calls God's righteous decree (1:32) or the law that the Gentiles keep without knowing Mosaic law (2:12-15). Nonetheless he still is convinced that his gospel is consistent with the main message of Mosaic law. This is why he describes the righteousness of faith as something toward which the Mosaic law points (3:21) and why he clarifies that righteousness by faith is established by the section of the Bible called the "Law" through the example of Abraham (3:31 -- 4:21)...)

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=129](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=129) [Mark Reasoner](#)  
Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, *Bethel University, St. Paul, MN*

## “The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 21st Chapter”

*Matthew 21:1-11 or Matthew 24:36-44; RCL, Matthew 24:36-44 (Matthew 3:1-12; RCL, the same reading)*

“Glory to You, O Lord”

## Matthew 21:1-11 The Triumphal Entry

21 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” <sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, (*Zechariah 9:9*)

<sup>5</sup> “Say to the daughter of Zion,  
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
on a colt,<sup>[a]</sup> the foal of a beast of burden.’”

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” <sup>10</sup> And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup> And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

- a. [Matthew 21:5](#) Or donkey, and on a colt

Or

*“The Gospel readings for the four Sundays in Advent, Year A, follow the pattern for all three years (A, B, and C).*

*According to the over-all design of the three-year lectionary,<sup>1</sup> the Gospel texts for the First Sunday are always apocalyptic, anticipating the Parousia, the second coming of Christ. Readings for the Second and Third Sundays focus on the preaching and ministry of John the Baptist as the forerunner of the Messiah’s first coming. The Gospel readings assigned for the Fourth Sunday proclaim the annunciation of the Nativity. Consequently, over the four Sundays in Advent there is a shift from anticipating the dramatic, disruptive consummation of all things to the more tender tone of preparing for the Nativity...” (continued after reading)*

## Matthew 24:36-44 No One Knows That Day and Hour

<sup>36</sup> “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son,<sup>[a]</sup> but the Father only. <sup>37</sup> For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Then two men will be

in the field; one will be taken and one left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. <sup>42</sup> Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

- a. [Matthew 24:36](#) Some manuscripts omit *nor the Son*

“...The part of the discourse assigned for the First Sunday in Advent begins abruptly and without warning. It takes up the question of timing. The point is made that no one -- not even the angels nor the Son -- knows the time of the coming of the Son of man; the only one who knows is God (24:36). For good measure, Jesus adds that the disciples, likewise, do not know (24:42). In fact, his coming will be at an hour they do not expect (24:44). Therefore they are to be ready at all times for his coming.

The passage thus speaks of *Christology* (Jesus is spoken of as Son of man and Lord), *eschatology* (the time of his coming as Son of man is indefinite), and *discipleship* (it is incumbent upon Jesus' followers to be ready for his coming as Son of man at all times).

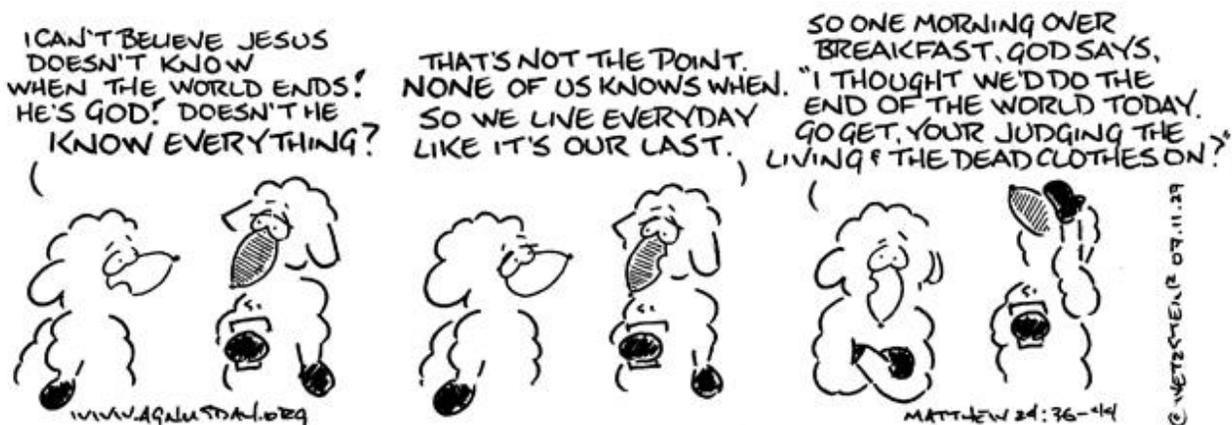
The passage consists of several parts:

1. A saying about the coming of the Son of man (24:36);
2. Three illustrative sayings (24:37-41);
3. An exhortation to watchfulness (24:42);
4. A fourth illustrative saying (sometimes called the parable of the nocturnal burglar, 24:43);  
and
5. An exhortation to readiness (24:44)...

...A problem with apocalyptic passages is that they frighten some Christians, or they are dismissed by others as dispensable for the Christian faith (one of those things that a person need not believe). But the message of Christ's return is not meant to frighten us. It is to give us hope...”

Read the details of this commentary at

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1912](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1912) Arland J. Hultgren Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN



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