

First Sunday in Advent December 3, 2017

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

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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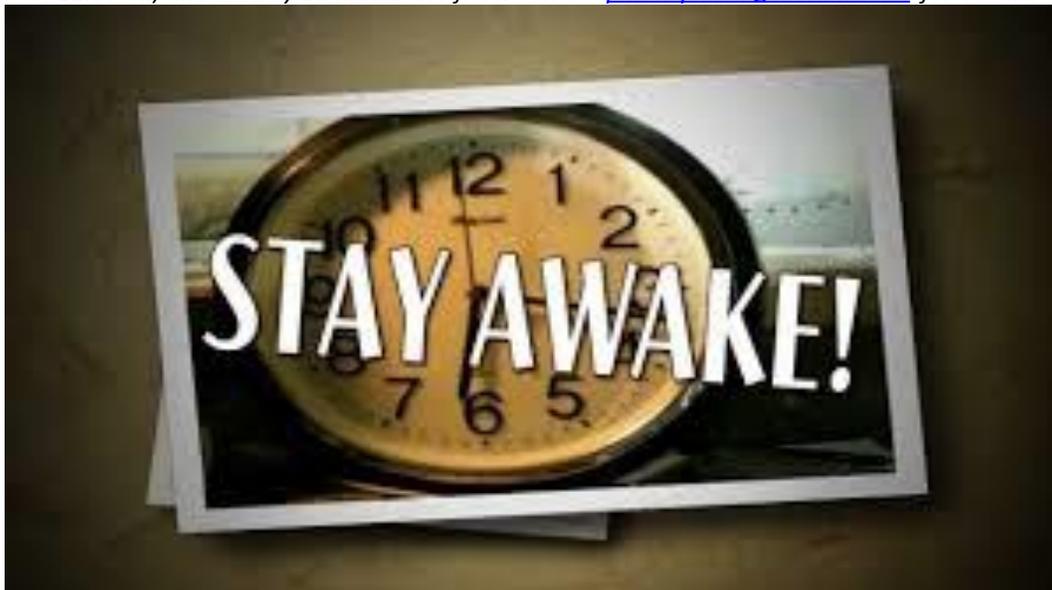
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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

November 30, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44130

Presented as a part of the bible study/worship at a weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, bi-weekly at an assisted living site, St. Philip Lutheran Church, Cleveland (First Sunday of the month at 11:00am) and used by Lutherans in Africa. Contact puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



<http://stmarypncc.ca/?calendars=first-sunday-of-advent-december-01-2013>

Hymn of the Day

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

“Savior of the nations, come”

“As attested by Augustine in 372, as well as by other early writers, Ambrose wrote this hymn in Latin ("Veni, Redemptor gentium") in the fourth century. The text appears in a number of eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts. Martin Luther (b. Eisleben, Saxony, Germany, 1483; d. Eisleben, 1546) translated this text into German ("Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland") in 1523 and included it in the Erfurt *Enchiridia* (1524). Consequently "Savior of the Nations" has become possibly the best known of the Lutheran Advent hymns. Various English translations are found in modern hymnals, many of which use, at least in part, William M. Reynolds's translation from his *Hymns, Original and Selected* (1851)..."

https://hymnary.org/text/savior_of_the_nations_come_show_seerveld

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0jO8e8pkw> LutheranWarbler

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgKpdIFX5LE> "Photo montage set to the Advent hymn "Savior of the Nations, Come." Produced for Midweek Advent services in 2009 for St. Lorenz Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth, Michigan."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSrl2MGtHcA> In German with a brass choir.

“Raselius/Osiander/Crüger - Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (UniversitätsChor München)”

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

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

Consider reading this article before reading the lessons.

<http://www.clba.org/first-sunday-in-advent/> Church of the Lutheran Bretheran

Isaiah 64:1-9, Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next Week: Isaiah 40:1-11, Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading)

“Reminiscing about the good old days is sometimes fun to do. The good old days were always better than they are now. Or maybe not. Even I can remember filling by father's VW Beetle with gas for 25 cents a gallon. Those were the good old days. Things were better back then...”

I think that our Old Testament reading for this morning catches the prophet Isaiah doing a little reminiscing. Back in the good old days, God used to rescue His people from their enemies in dramatic ways. In the good old days, God would divide the sea right so that His people would walk right through it on dry ground and then when their enemy pursued them, He'd close the sea up again and drown the all. Those were the good old days.

It used to be, that God would sponsor incredible contests with the other gods. They could never get their fire started but He sent fire down fire from the sky and set the whole pile of wet wood ablaze. Those were the good old days. Things were better back then when God demonstrated His power in dramatic ways...” (continued after the reading)

64 Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
 that the mountains might quake at your presence—
² ^[a] as when fire kindles brushwood
 and the fire causes water to boil—
 to make your name known to your adversaries,
 and that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³ When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
 you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴ From of old no one has heard
 or perceived by the ear,
 no eye has seen a God besides you,
 who acts for those who wait for him.
⁵ You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
 those who remember you in your ways.

Behold, you were angry, and **we** sinned;
 in our sins **we** have been a long time, and shall we be saved?^[b]
⁶ **We** have all become like one who is unclean,
 and all **our** righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
 and our iniquities, like the wind, take **us** away.
⁷ There is no one who calls upon your name,
 who rouses himself to take hold of you;
 for you have hidden your face from **us**,
 and have made **us** melt in^[c] the hand of our iniquities.
⁸ But now, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹ Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,
 and remember not iniquity forever.
 Behold, please look, **we** are all your people.

- a. [Isaiah 64:2](#) Ch 64:1 in Hebrew
- b. [Isaiah 64:5](#) *Or in your ways is continuance, that we might be saved*
- c. [Isaiah 64:7](#) Masoretic Text; Septuagint, Syriac, Targum ([Hebrew Bible](#)) *have delivered us into*

“...Isaiah felt that the time was ripe for God to do His thing again. 'Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence, as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil, to make your name known among your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence...'

Sounds good doesn't it? Wouldn't that be satisfying? 'Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down' and cut off the hands of the abortionists and the child molesters. And choke

every drug dealer on his own pills and lock up all of the ponzi schemers. And bring all those who seek to destroy the institution of marriage to a blazing defeat in every election forever.

Maybe you've even prayed a prayer like this a time or two. In fact, didn't we all just pray a prayer like that...

There is an old saying, 'be careful what you pray for. You just may get it...

It's almost as if Isaiah catches himself in the middle of his prayer and begins to realize the implications of what he's praying for. If God were to rend the heavens and come down, and execute His perfect justice on the evildoer would mean that we would not survive either. We also would be roasted in the fire and boiled in the water and the mountain would fall on us too.

It is striking just how drastically the tone of Isaiah's prayer changes about half way through. He goes from begging God to execute His dramatic justice, to a humble, penitential confession of the sin of Israel. Now, he's not speaking to God about 'THEM' at all. Listen carefully to the pronouns he uses – 'WE,' 'OUR,' 'US.'..."

<http://lcrwtvl.org/2011/11/sermon-advent-1-rend-the-heavens-and-come-down-isaiah-641-9-112711/> Rev. Paul Nielsen, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Waterville Maine, LCMS

Psalm 80:1-7; RCL, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (Psalm 85; RCL, Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13)

"...Psalm 80 is a typical community lament -- God is addressed and credentialed, the people's troubles are laid out, God's trustworthiness is rehearsed, and finally there is "the big ask."..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1906 **Henry Langknecht** Associate Professor of Homiletics, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH

Restore Us, O God

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Testimony. Of Asaph, a Psalm.*

* [80:1] Lilies. Eduth: the first term is probably the title of the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung; the second is unexplained. <http://www.usccb.org/bible/psalms/80> "Eduth" is translated "a testimony" in ESV. "

Psalm 80:1 (BBE) <To the chief music-maker; put to Shoshannim-eduth. Of Asaph.> The Bible in Basic English.

"This Psalm is titled, **To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A Testimony of Asaph. A Psalm.** As with Psalms 45, 60 and 69, this Psalm is **Set to "The Lilies."** The phrase may refer to general beauty of the composition, to the tune, or even to a six-stringed instrument known as the Shoshannim (the literal translation of the Hebrew).

"As with several of the Asaph Psalms, this one is often attributed to a later Asaph. "Here not only the southern kingdom but also the northern kingdom – it calls God the 'Shepherd of Israel' and speaks of Ephraim and Manasseh, two of the major northern tribes – and since it asks for Israel's deliverance, it is best seen as a plea for the deliverance of the northern kingdom sometime before its fall to the Assyrian armies in 721 b.c." (James Montgomery Boice)

“A later Asaph we should suppose, who had the unhappiness to live, like the ‘last minstrel,’ in evil times. If by the Asaph of David’s day, this Psalm was written in the spirit of prophecy, for it sings of times unknown to David.” (Spurgeon) ...”

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-80/>

80 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

² Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,
 stir up **your** might
 and come to save us!

³ **Restore us,**^[a] **O God;**
let *your* face shine, that we may be saved!

⁴ O LORD God of hosts,
 how long will *you* be angry with your people's prayers?

⁵ **You** have fed them with the bread of tears
 and given them tears to drink in full measure.

⁶ **You** make us an object of contention for our neighbors,
 and our enemies laugh among themselves.

⁷ **Restore us, O God of hosts;**
let *your* face shine, that we may be saved!

a. [Psalm 80:3](#) Or *Turn us again*; also verses [7](#), [19](#)

When a psalm is divided up, like the one for this Sunday (verses 1-7, 17-19), the integrity of the psalm is lost. (Our reading does not include verses 17-19)

Then the beautifully intertwined words of lament to God and praise of God are lost. First of all we need to respond to these concerns.

In the case of Psalm 80, the structure easily discerned as a common refrain is repeated after each of the three sections of the psalm:

"Restore us, O God;
 let your face shine, that we may be saved" (verses 3, 7, 19).

The three sections of the psalm are thus defined as a cry to God to save (verses 1-3), followed by the identity of the plight of the northern kingdom (verses 4-7), and concluding with the familiar imagery of Israel as the vine planted by God (verses 8-19)...

Having claimed the saving power of God, the psalm concludes with the **first** of the three refrains claiming God's presence to save:

"Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved" (verse 3).

The **second** section of the psalm identifies concern for the plight of the northern kingdom. The psalmist envisions that God's anger has been kindled against distrusting king Ahaz who

refuses to accept God as his only ally...The lament of the psalmist is expressed in the imagery of God's refusal to even accept the prayers of the people that ascend to his nostrils.

The imagery of "the bread of tears" indicates the depth of the psalmist's lament as the sustenance of bread and water is identified with the people who have turned from God...

In the midst of their despair we hear the refrain for the second time calling forth the presence of God's face to shine upon them in the gift of salvation:

"Restore us, O God;

let your face shine, that we may be saved" (verse 7).

The intervening verses omitted in the lectionary reading for this Sunday (verses 8-16) bring forth the *third* section of the psalm. These verses focus on the imagery or allegory of Israel as the vine planted by God. The story begins with the Red Sea deliverance of the people from Egypt (verse 8), and leads into the blessing of being rooted and branching out in prosperity from the sea to the River throughout the land to which they are led by God (verses 8-13).

The cry of the psalmist returns to call forth God's favor to look down upon the vine and have regard to its favor after being burned and cut down (verses 14-16).

The lectionary returns to the concluding three verses of the psalm to hear the plea for God to once again reveal his right hand of honor, favor and strength:

The closing verse of the psalm repeats for the third time the prayer of the psalmist for the face of God to shine in favor upon the people:

"Restore us, O God;

let your face shine, that we may be saved" (verse 19).

Through this psalm we hear the all too familiar story of people falling away from the God of salvation and trusting in human reliance. The lament is real and the depth of rejection is deeply felt. The plea to God to save is desperate. The lament and agony of these words and the hope of returning to God's promise of life is to be heralded in this season..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=788 **Paul S. Berge**

Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28; RCL, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 (2 Peter 3:8-14; RCL, 2 Peter 3:8-15a)

"...A victorious line of argument... " (Continued after the reading.)

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God^[a] has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him,

then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

a. [1 Corinthians 15:27](#) Greek *he*

“...In contrast with the deplorable results which would follow from the supposition as held by the ignorant deniers of the resurrection of the body, Paul now triumphantly sets before his readers the fact of the resurrection and its glorious consequences. If Christ had not risen, all the disastrous events must have followed as a matter of course. But as matters now stand, if we look at the situation as it really exists: Christ has been raised from the dead as a First-fruit of them that sleep. The fact of His resurrection is beyond doubt and dispute, is, in fact, not called into question even by those Corinthian Christians that hold a wrong view with regard to this doctrine. And thereby Christ is set forth before us as the First-fruits, the first offering, of the new harvest, Lev. 23, 10, a sign and token that the entire harvest is sanctified to the Lord. He was the first dead person to lay aside all mortality and to assume a spiritual body which would not be subject to death in all eternity. And so they that fell asleep in Christ in the hope of eternal life will also arise from the dead; the first harvest-sheaf will be followed by all the other sheaves; the bodies of all the believers will lay aside mortality; consecrated to God as they are, they will become partakers of that same spirituality, Col. 1, 18; Rev. 1, 5...”

When Christ thus comes, then is the end; His return for the final judgment means the conclusion of the world's history, when He delivers up the kingdom to His God and Father, when He has put down and abolished every rule and every authority and every power. Christ is now the King in the Kingdom of Power and in the Kingdom of Grace. And He is performing the duties of this office continually; He is adding further souls to His Kingdom of Grace, He is making intercession for those that have been admitted under His rule by faith. This work of mercy continues to the last day, when the history of this present world will come to an end, when the last elect will be added to the number fixed by the Lord. By that time also He will abolish all the forces of evil that oppose His work of grace, no matter how firmly fixed their rule, no matter how extensive their authority, no matter how great their power seems to be at the present time...

And incidentally the Son will then subject Himself to the Father, not as subordinated to Him in essence, but in the free submission of love. In all the works of His office as Redeemer, He was loyal to His Father in perfect obedience, and now the Son, in His Sonship, subjects Himself to His Father, as Father, that God may be all, the one object of praise, glory, and adoration, in all, the believers giving Him the joyful reverence of their blessedness, and the unbelievers and all other creatures bowing before Him as the supreme Lord. Mark: These words in no way teach the inferiority of the Son to the Father in essence: on the contrary, the absolute unity in the distinction of persons stands out all the more clearly and conspicuously. Whatsoever glory the Son has gained is devoted to the glory and power of the Father, who, in turn, glorifies the Son. Cp. Chap. 3, 22; 11, 3. 76)...” http://www.kretzmannproject.org/EP_MAJOR/1CO_15.htm

Handel does it well again. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhHCeeTYv2w>

ARE YOU READY FOR THE CHALLENGE?

THE MARK CHALLENGE – LECTIONARY YEAR B 2017-18

Challenge yourself to produce a handwritten copy of the book of Mark by Christ the King Sunday, November 25, 2018.

It's only 16 chapters long (678 verses or 11,304 words, subject to the translation and how you treat the 'extra verses' in the last chapter). Break that down to a schedule that works for you; a specific time or day each week, 3.25 weeks per chapter, or about two verses a day. Use a spiral notebook or a journal. Decide if you want a "Red Letter" edition for the words of Christ. Invent your own illustrated manuscript style. Consider reading the book over the next year.

"The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 11th Chapter"

Mark 11:1-10 or Mark 13:24-37; RCL, Mark 13:24-37 (*Mark 1:1-8; RCL, the same reading*)

Mark 11:1-10

"We have been on our way to the city of Jerusalem from the opening words of the Gospel of Mark: "The beginning of the good news/gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1).

Like the opening words in Genesis, the evangelist Mark is establishing an identity with the first beginning, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), with a new beginning, a new beginning of God's good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

*The Gospel of Mark has been characterized as a passion narrative (11:1-16:8) with an extended introduction (1:1-10:52). We enter the passion narrative of the Gospel of Mark having just heard the cry of blind Bartimaeus identifying who Jesus is: "Son of David, have mercy on me!" His first cry is followed by rebuke and Bartimaeus cries out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me" (10:47-48). Jesus responds to his request for sight and says: "Go; your faith has made you well (Greek: or "saved you"). **Immediately** he regained his sight and followed him on the way" (10:52). This is the first occurrence of Jesus' identity as the Son of David in the Gospel of Mark and leads us into Jerusalem, the city of David, in our first text for today (11:1-10)..."*

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1240 **Paul S. Berge** Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

11 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus^{1a} sent two of his disciples² and said to them, **"Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'"**⁴ And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in

the street, and they untied it. ⁵ And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷ And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹ And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

- a. [Mark 11:1](#) Greek *he*

Mark 13:24-37

“Mark 13:1-37 is set exactly in the middle of the passion narrative in the gospel of Mark.

The overall theme for these five chapters (11:1-15:47) could be entitled: Jesus reveals the temple of his body as the true and living presence of God. A sub-theme identifies the disciples’ inability and failure to watch with Jesus as the drama of his life comes to a close.

We will establish the context of the First Sunday of Advent text (13:24-37), and how our text is set within this final drama of the Son of Man, in three acts...” (continued after the reading)

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

²⁸ “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

No One Knows That Day or Hour

³² “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard, keep awake.^[a] For you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants^[b] in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵ Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows,^[c] or in the morning—³⁶ lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

- a. [Mark 13:33](#) Some manuscripts add *and pray*
- b. [Mark 13:34](#) Or *bondservants*
- c. [Mark 13:35](#) That is, the third watch of the night, between midnight and 3 a.m.

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“...The **first act** of the drama of Jesus the Messiah begins in Mark 11:1-12:44. Jesus enters Jerusalem, the city of David and is acclaimed "the Son of David." Jesus enters the temple precincts and moves in and out revealing the truth of God's presence now incarnated in his teaching. The cursing of the fig tree (11:14), the parable of the vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7), and rejection of the cornerstone (Psalm 118:22) in 12:1-12, bring Jesus' opponents to the fore...

The **second act** focuses on the apocalyptic chapter, Mark 13:1-37. The audience that hears Jesus' teaching has changed. Jesus, the rabbi, now teaches his disciples concerning the truth of God's presence, not in a temple made of stone, but in his very body... A desolating sacrifice in the temple and cosmic signs will signal the end and the coming of the Son of Man. Only the Father knows this day or hour.

The **third act** (Mark 14:1-15:47) unfolds the apocalyptic events of the Son of Man...

The gospel text, Mark 13:24-37, inaugurates us into the Advent season on this first Sunday. The Advent season is played out in our culture as a time of many conflicting expectations. One is not expecting to hear a text like this when one is busy getting ready for Christmas. Shopping and parties for this mainly secular event have no place for an apocalyptic text with this kind of imagery...

The Advent of the Master returning home is indeed happening in this Advent time, and we are admonished three times "to keep alert/awake" (13:34, 35, 37). The sign for us within the community of faith is that Jesus has come, is present, and will come again...

Hear the closing promise of Jesus, the Son of Man, in light of all that has been said in this marvelous Advent text: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (13:31). Likewise, the final word of our Advent text is a word of urgency and watchfulness: "And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake" (13:37).

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=184 **Paul S. Berge** Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.



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