

First Sunday in Advent – 2023

Saturday, 12/2 at 4:00 & Sunday, 12/3 at 9:00



Text: Isaiah 64:1-9 NAS 1995

Advent Wednesdays: Services at 11 & 7; Free Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: *Happy New Year!* Today is *the beginning of the Church Year* and *the beginning of the Season of Advent*. Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas; this year Advent begins on the latest possible day – *because Christmas Eve falls on the fourth Sunday of Advent*.

Advent means “coming”; during Advent we doublecheck our readiness for Jesus’ second coming and prepare to celebrate His first coming. Advent is **not** a season to celebrate, **but** a season to
▶ remember our sins, ▶ be sorry for our sins, and
▶ understand our great need for Jesus. Then, during Christmas, *we celebrate God’s love and God’s Son!*

Sunday

3

10

17

24

31

Today, as we focus on **Isaiah 64:1-9**, let us ✦pay attention to the LORD, ✦wait on the LORD, ✦admit our sins, and ✦His seek forgiveness.

1. **Pay Attention to the LORD:** ¹ Oh, that You would rend [tear] the heavens *and* come down, That the mountains might quake at Your presence— ² As fire kindles the brushwood, *as* fire causes water to boil—To make Your name known to Your adversaries, *That* the nations may tremble at Your presence! ³ When You did awesome things which we did not expect, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence.
 - a. When Did the Mountains Quake? Going back about 3,400 years to the time of Moses, the Bible says: “...it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai *was* all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently (Exodus 19:16-18).
 - b. Has the LORD Sought Our Attention? Yes, *through awesome events in history*, for example: ✦the Roman defeat of Jerusalem (AD 70), ✦the eruption of Mt. St. Helens (1980), and the terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001. Each event should ✦grab our attention, ✦remind us of the LORD’s power, and ✦cause us to highly respect Him! *Some events can be terrifying, but they are good – when the LORD uses them to get our attention!*

2. **Wait on the LORD:** ⁴ For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, Nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him. ⁵ You meet him who rejoices in doing righteousness, Who remembers You in Your ways.

a. Waiting: Waiting →to drink *when parched*, →to eat *when starving*, or →for relief *when suffering* can each be difficult, *but waiting expresses our trust in the LORD to act **when** and **how** He knows to be best.*

b. Doing Right:

- i. Let it come from a repentant heart.
- ii. Let us love to do right to honor our great God.
- iii. Let us rejoice in His response to us: **2 Chron. 16:9**
“For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”

3. **Admit Your Sins:** Behold, You were angry, for we sinned, *We continued* in them a long time; And shall we be saved? ⁶ For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷ There is no one who calls on Your name, Who arouses himself to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us [*since you were angry with us*] And have delivered us into the power of our iniquities. // When we sin for a long time without repentance, *forgiveness can seem impossible.*
“Winnowing farmers harvested the grain and, on a breezy evening, would throw it into the air. Since the chaff was lighter than the grain, the breeze would blow the chaff

away. Accumulated chaff was burned—a vivid picture of the end of a life divorced from God!” (TLSB). If those words describe your life, *the LORD is calling you to ♦admit your sin and ♦be sorry for your sin!*

4. **Seek His Forgiveness:** ⁸ **But now, O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand. ⁹ Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD, Nor remember iniquity forever; Behold, look now, all of us are Your people.**
- a. A Proper Advent Attitude: The LORD is my potter, and I am His clay. Since He made me, my life belongs to Him. Therefore, let me turn from my sins and seek His forgiveness.
 - b. The LORD’s Mercy through Jesus: Our sins have deserved the LORD’s anger, but He has shown us mercy – *putting our sins upon Jesus, and then crushing Him with the eternal punishment that we deserved.*

Conclusion: Now, going forward in our lives, let us **♦keep** paying attention to the LORD, **♦keep** waiting on the LORD, **♦keep** admitting our sins, **♦keep** seeking His forgiveness, and **♦keep** being sure that we have it through Jesus!

Let Us Pray: Dear LORD, we have been so bad to You, *yet You have been so good to us!* ♦Fill us with thanksgiving, ♦draw us closer to You, and ♦bring our families, friends, and neighbors into Your heavenly kingdom!

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