

A.L.I.V.E. Bible Study
Date: November 28, 2021
Advent Week 1
Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Matthew 24:36-44, Romans 13:11-14
Theme: Watch

Introduction to Advent:

“The season of Advent, which comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "visit," begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is the beginning of the church year for Christians.

During Advent, we prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for and need of forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming.

Although we are accustomed to celebrating Christmas on a single day, in both Christian tradition and on the church calendar, the Christmas season lasts from sundown on Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) through Epiphany of the Lord (Jan. 6). This is sometimes referred to as "the 12 days of Christmas."

Advent begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day....”

Adapted from "What is Advent?" and "Understanding Advent" by Dean McIntyre, retired director of music resources, Discipleship Ministries, UMC. Originally published in Interpreter Magazine, November–December, 2017.

Although Advent is centered around the expectation of the birth of Christ, it also focuses us who are living in the “in between times” forward on his return or 2nd coming.

Read Isaiah 2:1-5 and Psalm 122

1. According to Isaiah 2:2, what is this passage (and all of these passages) referring to?
 - a. Sounds like an awesome worship service.
 - b. In the last days...

2. Is this verse talking about mountains and hills?
 - a. Yes, it sounds like they're getting up a group to go to church.
 - b. No, I think this is still talking about the last days...so maybe, they're going to heaven?
 - c. Well, Israel had a “pilgrimage” engrained in their patterns and lifestyle. So, it was an exciting event (better than the family Thanksgiving and Christmas) to go up to the Temple and the Mount of the Lord (Jerusalem/the temple mount/Mount Zion). What modern Christians think of as heaven was called, in places, the new Jerusalem. Mount of the Lord/Holy hill is used interchangeably between the physical temple, going into the presence of the Lord figuratively and ultimate fulfillment in Heaven.

3. Find the following themes about the last days in Isaiah 2:1-5 and Psalm 122:
 - a. Worship. _____
 - b. Judgment. _____
 - c. Peace. _____
 - d. Blessing/Prosperity. _____

Read Matthew 24:36-44:

4. Who, according to Matt 24:36, knows the day when he will return?
 - a. The preachers on tv.
 - b. The Mayan calendar.
 - c. I'm pretty sure I know.
 - d. No one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the father.

5. To what does Jesus compare this event in Matt 24:37 (see also Genesis 6:9-7:24)? _____

6. What do these events have in common, according to Matt 24:38-41? _____

What, according to Matt 36:42-44, is the "moral" or point of the story that Jesus is telling? _____

7. How will it be, when the Son returns, according to Matt 24:37-41? _____

8. What is the significance of the illustration about the thief?
 - a. Thieves, by definition, come when you least expect them.
 - b. Like a robbery, you would be ready if you knew Christ was coming.
 - c. Be ready...ALL THE TIME...IT COULD BE ANY TIME!

Read Romans 13:11-14:

9. How does Paul interpret Jesus's words to those to whom he was writing?
 - a. Paul has just told the Roman church to "let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love on another..." (Roman s 13:8).
 - b. Paul is suggesting that you should not wait to do the will of God.
 - c. Many of us put off paying our "debts" until the last possible moment. For some of us, that is the due date. For others, that is after the due date when we are ignoring the collection calls and hoping it will all just go away. We tend to do the same thing with God...Paul is saying DON'T.
 - d. Paul is saying that it is time to WAKE UP! If that means, make things right with your neighbor, do it. If that means stop living in sexual immorality and debauchery or dissension and jealousy, do it. You may not have another day, so stop living as if you do.

10. In the context of Isaiah 2 and Psalm 122, do you think fear of punishment is the only reason to be ready?

11. Are you ready? _____