

# Sermon for The First Sunday in Advent

**Date:** December 2, 2018

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

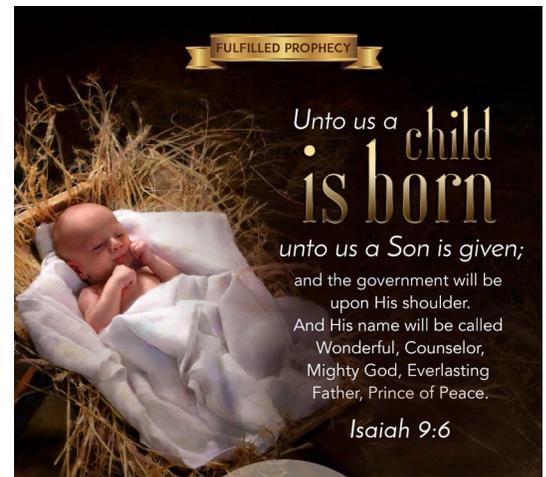
**Old Testament:** Jeremiah 33:14-18

**Epistle Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 21:25-36

**Sermon Text:** Jeremiah 33:14-18

**Sermon Title:** Prophecy – The Messiah Foretold



**Introit:** Psalm 89:14-16, 18 Antiphon Zechariah 9:9b

## Hymns:

LSB 332 – Savior of the Nations Come (v. 1-2)

LSB 333 – Once He Came in Blessing

LSB 350 – Come, Thou Precious Ransom Come

## Distribution:

LSB 342 – What Hope! An Eden Prophesied

LSB 331 – The Advent of Our King

## Liturgy:

Divine Service IV, p. 151



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## **Text: Jeremiah 33:14-18**

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfill the promise that I made to Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous branch to spring up for David. He will do what is fair and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live securely. Jerusalem will be called, ‘The Lord Our Righteousness.’”

This what the Lord says, “David will never fail to have a descendant sitting on the throne of Israel. The Levitical priests will never fail to have a descendant in my presence to sacrifice burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to prepare daily sacrifices.”

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Grace to you in the name of the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Advent is the season of anticipation. We are waiting, expectantly, for a very special day. A day we celebrate with the giving of gifts, the gathering of family, and special foods. It is a time of year with many happy memories and reminiscent feelings of childhood recollections. The music becomes festive, the decorations of our homes more colorful, and the odors from the kitchens full of wonder. Why? For what reason?

- Do we do this to celebrate the Winter solstice. The shortest day of the year December 21. No.
- Do we do this for Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, commemorating the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt? No.
- What about for Ramadan? A time to earn grace by performing good works and prayers. No.

There are many alternatives to Christmas but we celebrate Christmas for a very specific reason – Christmas. The word Christmas is combination of two words, Christ and Mass. Christ is Latin a word with which I'm sure most of you are familiar. It means the Anointed One. Mass is a Latin word that means celebration. So Christ-Mass is Christ's Celebration, or the celebration of, the arrival of, the Christ child. That is what Christmas is about. That is reason for the preparation time of Advent. The arrival of baby Jesus.

Advent has always historically been tied tightly to Easter and Judgment Day. Jesus' birth, Jesus victory, and Jesus' return are the three events around which all of eternity revolves. The promise was made to Adam and Eve.<sup>1</sup> They were told One would come to repair the relationship they had broken with God. Though they expected it to happen very quickly,<sup>2</sup> God's timing was different.

Time passed. Noah was born. The flood came and still God's promise held true, but unfulfilled. In time a man named Abraham was born.<sup>3</sup> He was not a man who worshiped the One True God.<sup>4</sup> Yet God went to Abraham and told him he would be the one through whom that One would come who would repair the relationship between all people and God.<sup>5</sup> Time continued on... through Isaac, and Jacob whom God named Israel<sup>6</sup> – "One Who Wrestles with God."

The people of Israel grew through the time of Joseph in Egypt. 450 years later they came out of Egypt a great nation, and through the powerful works of God Almighty they walked across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Still the One had not come. God divided the people into twelve tribes and chose the tribe of Levi to service as priests<sup>7</sup> for the people. Still the One did not come. Still they waited for Him. The kingdom of Israel grew, cities were populated and still the One had not come.

1 Genesis 3:15

2 Genesis 4:1

3 Gen 11:27 – Actually he was named Abram at birth. Later God changed his name to Abraham.

4 Joshua 24:2

5 Genesis 12:3

6 Genesis 32:28

7 Joshua 13:33

As time passed these people, God's chosen people, sinned grievously and often. God's punishment was often harsh and severe, but His promise never faltered. The promise of One who would come.

David became king and still that One had not come. Time rolled on... and on...

We know He did come, and His name is Jesus. We are now entering that time of waiting for His birth. Reminding us of the Old Testament time of waiting.

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This Advent season I am going to focus on the Old Testament prophecies, or predictions, of who Jesus would be and when Jesus would come. It is serendipitously convenient that on our Advent wreath we have lit the first of five candles. This first candle, in some traditions, has historically been called the Prophecy Candle. It reminds us that God's promise to come and fix everything that we have broken was made long ago, and God keeps His promises.

There are hundreds of promises made by God about the One who was to come. Our Old Testament reading was one of them. Listen again to those words:

This what the Lord says: David will never fail to have a descendant sitting on the throne of Israel. The Levitical priests will never fail to have a descendant in my presence to sacrifice burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to prepare daily sacrifices.<sup>8</sup>

Is that prophecy true? Has Israel always had a man sitting on the throne of David? Has the Temple always had priests from the tribe of Levi serving the Lord? No. In fact history records it well. From 70AD to 1947AD there was no kingdom of Israel, let alone the Temple which still does not stand. For nearly 1,900 years no one sat on the throne of David, and no one serves in the Temple yet, because in 70AD the Roman Empire came in and laid the entire city to waste.

So that must mean God is a failure, or a liar. Right? Wrong! This prophecy is not talking about an Earth-bound kingdom.<sup>9</sup> This prophecy can only be talking about an eternal kingdom that has no end.<sup>10</sup> Who but God could reign in such a place? This prophecy is predicting One who would be something no one had ever been both priest and king. No one had ever held both offices. The high priest and the king were always two separate people,<sup>11</sup> but we now know that One came who would forever serve as both Priest and King.

We now better understand how God has revealed Himself to us. It is the Father who is our Righteous Judge. He commanded that creation exist. However it was the Son who did the creating. John chapter one tells us these things. Then we messed things up. We brought sin into this world. For that reason we needed God to clean it up, so He did. The Son came into His own creation<sup>12</sup> and finished the work necessary to fix all that we broke. Upon completing that task the Father placed the Son over us as our King. Jesus Christ will reign forever.<sup>13</sup> He has sent the

8 Jeremiah 33:17-18

9 John 18:36

10 Revelation 11:15

11 Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:17

12 John 1:10

13 Luke 1:33

Holy Spirit to hold and sustain us in that faith until we see God, in peace and in joy, face to face.

Jesus was also placed between us and the Father. He is our Mediator.<sup>14</sup> The One who goes between us and the Father. That was the role of the priest in the Old Testament. Under the Old Contract, you could not go into the Holy Place of the Temple and make an offering or request forgiveness on your own. The priest had to do that for you. Jesus has now filled that role forever. It is now Jesus who goes to the Father and speaks on our behalf. It is Jesus who says, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”<sup>15</sup> It is Jesus who says, “the one whom the Son frees is free indeed.”<sup>16</sup>

Jesus now reigns forever as our King. It is He who guards and protects us from the powers and principalities that desire to destroy us.<sup>17</sup> It is He who commands the angels to stand watch and fight for us.<sup>18</sup> It is also Jesus who stands forever as our Priest. It is He who made the one time perfect sacrifice for our sins. His sacrifice did not just cover or hid our sins, like the Old Testament sacrifices did. His sacrifice cleaned our sins. His sacrifice made us perfect. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.<sup>19</sup> We do not just look perfect in the eyes of the Father. We are perfect in the eyes of the Father. Jesus has made us so.

That is what Advent is all about. The anticipation of that little Child who is our Savior and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ the Lord. As much as Advent is about the exciting approach of Christmas it should also be about the exciting approach of Judgment Day. We should be looking forward to that day with even more fervor, even more excitement, even more anticipation because on that day the gifts we will receive will make gold as valuable as asphalt,<sup>20</sup> and precious gems as big as your head as valuable as field stone.<sup>21</sup>

This Christmas my young boy is looking forward to a video game and a remote controlled car. He’s been asking for it for over a month already and the excitement over the possibility is something he can barely contain. How much more should we be excited about what God has planned for us? If my young boy receives what he’s looking for I’m sure he’ll squeal like a girl in celebration. You might laugh, but shouldn’t, wouldn’t, won’t we do the same when we see what God has prepared for us?!

Yet for us it is not maybe it will come, or possibly it will come. We know it will come, it will be ours, it must be ours because God does not say ‘maybe’ or ‘probably.’ God says, “Yes.”<sup>22</sup> We should anticipate Jesus’ Second Coming with even more excitement than children anticipate Christmas. They don’t doubt that Christmas will come. They don’t hope it will come. They know it will come. They know it must come. It always comes.

There is where we should stand with God. Not wondering if that day will come, not hoping it might come someday, but knowing it will come, it must come, because God has declared it

14 1 John 2:2

15 Luke 23:34

16 John 8:36

17 Ephesians 6:12

18 Psalm 91:11

19 John 1:29

20 Revelation 21:21

21 Revelation 21:19-20

22 Revelation 22:20

so, and God never changes,<sup>23</sup> God's promises never falter, and God loves us in ways we cannot yet understand or comprehend this side of heaven's gates.

May this Advent season remind us of that truth and hold us in that wonder. The wonder of Jesus our Lord who has saved us.

Amen.