

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018

## First Sunday of Advent

Year C

Purple



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### Collect

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### Jeremiah 33:14-16 English Standard Version (ESV)

#### The LORD's Eternal Covenant with David

33<sup>14</sup> “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.<sup>15</sup> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.<sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

**COMMENT:** Jeremiah lived seven centuries before Christ was born. His ministry spanned four decades from 627 to 586 BC. Two great crises occurred during this time. The break-up of the Assyrian empire and the rise of the Babylonian empire changed the political environment for the kingdom of Judah. The resurgence of religious nationalism during the reign of King Josiah created a new moral and spiritual environment. Jeremiah may well have been greatly involved in that revival as the narrative parts of the book describe. Like most pre-exilic prophets, Jeremiah was primarily a preacher, not an author. So the book that bears his name must be regarded as only partially his. The lectionary passage comes from a so-called “book of consolation” (chapters 30, 31 and 33) into which is inserted an incident from Jeremiah's life illustrating this hopeful theme. (32) These oracles offer hope beyond national disaster. They also show the influence of the earlier prophet Hosea and close links with Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55) Some of the material is undoubtedly that of Jeremiah himself as well as from Baruch, the scribe. This passage speaks with intense hope of a time when an anointed king (Heb: messiah) of David's line would

come to bring righteousness and justice to Israel and so give the nation the security it so desperately needed and earnestly desired. It emphasizes the prophetic faith that the nation's fate will not be decided by the Babylonians, but by the LORD. This faith in the LORD as Lord of history is found throughout the Old Testament, but especially in the oracles of the great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It presents a hopeful faith for difficult times such as our own.

## **Luke 21:25-36** English Standard Version (ESV)

### **The Coming of the Son of Man**

21<sup>25</sup> “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, <sup>26</sup> people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

### **The Lesson of the Fig Tree**

<sup>29</sup> And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

### **Watch Yourself**

<sup>34</sup> “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

**COMMENT:** The expectation of Christ's return dominated early Christian thought. Bible scholars debate whether Jesus himself or the early apostolic church taught in such terms. Uniformly, the gospels and Acts attribute this teaching to Jesus, although in John's Gospel there is some ambiguity whether certain sayings of Jesus referred to his resurrection rather than an eschatological Parousia at the end of historical time. Many of the concepts and images were drawn from standard Jewish apocalyptic writing found in the Hebrew scriptures and similar eschatological literature of the intertestamental period. The prophets

much earlier had declared their faith in a future historical event, the Day of the Lord, when God's rule of righteousness, peace, justice and prosperity would become permanent for Israel. The earliest gospel statement in Mark 1:15 set the ministry of Jesus as the dawning of this new age. Matthew and Luke shared this belief. But the moment had not yet come by the eighth or ninth decade of 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD when Luke's Gospel was composed. Later New Testament writers, notably the author of the Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus, dealt with the delayed expectation of the church. There may well be actual historical events behind this apocalyptic passage in all three Synoptic Gospels. As can be seen by comparing Matthew 24:4-36 Luke 21:5-38 to Mark 13:5-37, Matthew and Luke were dependent on Mark's original statement of the early oral tradition. The differences in the three accounts may have been due to an earlier Aramaic version of Mark which the two other authors had before them. What is clear from this passage is that we are to learn to live by trust God, whatever may befall us.

### **Psalm 25** *Ad te, Domine, levavi* Grail Psalter

**℟** **To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.**

<sup>1</sup> *Of David*

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> I trust you, let me not be disappointed;  
do not let my enemies triumph.

<sup>3</sup> Those who hope in you shall not be disappointed,  
but only those who wantonly break faith. **℟**

<sup>4</sup> Lord, make me know your ways.  
Lord, teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup> Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:  
for you are God my saviour. **℟**

In you I hope all day long

<sup>7c</sup> because of your goodness, O Lord.

<sup>6</sup> Remember your mercy, Lord,  
and the love you have shown from of old.

<sup>7</sup> Do not remember the sins of my youth.  
In your love remember me. **℟**

<sup>8</sup> The Lord is good and upright.

He shows the path to those who stray,

<sup>9</sup> He guides the humble in the right path,  
He teaches his way to the poor. **℟**

<sup>10</sup> His ways are faithfulness and love  
for those who keep his covenant and law. **℟**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** The special relationship between the LORD and Israel as well as the personal faith of the individual Israelite form the central theme of this psalm which is both liturgical and instructional. It is a prayer of supplication for the LORD's intervention in some unstated personal problem and as such was useful to anyone seeking divine help in distress. The psalm has the form of an acrostic, however. In Hebrew, each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew language. This was done for easier memorization. It also contains similarities to Wisdom literature, e.g. vss. 4-5; 12-14. As such, its superscription "Of David" is an anachronism attached to the psalm to give it liturgical authority. This could be read as "After the style of David". This type of psalm appeared only in the late post-exilic period when the worship of temple was highly structured by the Levitical priesthood. It may have come from a collection of psalms of varying age with the authorship attributed to David.

### **Short Preface**

And now we give you thanks because you sent him to redeem us from sin and death and to make us inheritors of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may with joy behold his appearing, and in confidence may stand before him.

### **Post Communion**

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **Blessing**

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**