

be alert

We normally think of Advent as a time to prepare for Christmas. And, it is. "Advent" means "the coming," and it is indeed about Christ coming in Bethlehem... But, that's not all it's about. Because one of the tenets of our faith is that Christ will come again. And so, each Advent we begin with remembering Jesus' second coming, before we turn our attention back to Jesus' first coming. We see this theme in the Gospel lesson (Luke 21:25-36), which comes from the "little apocolypse" in Luke's Gospel. Jesus says here that he will return, and that there will be signs of that ringing throughout creation. He tells us that we are to be "alert," and ready to stand before him when we comes.

1 Thessalonians is the earliest Christian document we have, having been written years before anything else in the New Testament. Paul wrote this letter primarily to calm down the anxieties of the Christian community in Thessalonika who were worried that Jesus hadn't returned yet. In this lesson (1 Thess 3:9-13), Paul prays for them, asking that God would help make their paths cross again so that they could see one another, and that their faith would increase.

Jeremiah was a prophet whose ministry took place in the years leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile in Babylon. His message was to warn the people to take their covenant with God seriously. In the lesson for today (Jer 33:14-16), Jeremiah is talking about the hope that God has for God's People after the hardships they will endure. Out of the lineage of King David will come one who will live by righteousness. Of course Christians identify Jeremiah prophesy here as being about the coming of Jesus.

Devotion

Call and Response

Show me your ways, O Lord

and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation.

Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love,

for they are from everlasting.

(Adapted from Psalm 25)

Discussion and Question

In this season of Advent, when we are waiting for the coming of Jesus, how can we remember God's "compassion and love?" Who does God have compassion and love for? Who are we supposed to have compassion and love for?

Create an action-plan for who you can show compassion and love for this week.

Prayer

Come among us O God, and remember your compassion and love; so that when your Son Jesus arrives, we might come to adore him, and spread your compassion and love to the ends of the earth. Amen.

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