

Welcome

Song: The God of Abr'am praise © Thomas Olivers

1 The God of Abr'am praise, who reigns enthroned above, 2 He by himself hath sworn - we on his oath depend
Ancient of everlasting days and God of love We shall on eagles' wings upborn to heav'n ascend
Jehovah, great I AM, by earth and heav'n confessed; We shall behold his face, we shall his power adore
We bow and bless the sacred name for ever blest. And sing the wonders of his grace for evermore.

Advent 1 prayer Lord Jesus, Light of the World, you called the Patriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment. May we be obedient to your call, and be watchful to receive you, for you are our light and our salvation. Amen.

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 2:1-5

1 *This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:*
2 *In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.*
3 *Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*
4 *He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.*
5 *Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.* This the Word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Reflection - part 1

When Billy Graham 1st came to UK his organisation put on an amazing and fascinating Advertising campaign Suddenly posters appeared all over the place saying: *He is coming*
Then, later, new ones appeared asking: *Who is coming?*
And after a few more weeks the posters then explained: *Billy Graham is coming* - including the different places and dates of the events when he'd be speaking.

It all created quite a stir Brits weren't used to that sort of advertising
Yet it's nothing new. In fact it's a bit like Advent. What's Advent mean? It's from the Latin and means COMING
The Bible, from first to last, promises and proclaims: *He is Coming*
The first book of the Bible, Genesis, begins with the Creation (that God made it), The Fall (how mankind spoilt it) and the 1st Promise that God would rectify the situation

Genesis 3:14,15 tells us how God judged the Serpent (Satan) and in the same breath Promised a Saviour:

And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman (Eve); between your offspring and her offspring (the promised Deliverer) He will crush your head when you will strike his heel

Right at the beginning of everything, God declared: *a Seed is coming* - He is coming

Later in Genesis God promised Abraham, the 1st Patriarch, *"In your seed (in your offspring) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*

Abraham was given great promises, and had great hopes. Look, *He's coming*.

Later the Patriarch Jacob in Gen 49:10 blessed his 4th son Judah with a promise of the Saviour's coming *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh (the Peace Giver, the Lion of Judah) comes; and to Him shall the obedience of the people be.*

Moses (after the prophetic demonstration at the 1st Passover of God's salvation by the protection of a lamb's blood) told Israel in Deuteronomy 18:15 *He is coming!* *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.*

The Patriarchs had this promise: *He is coming*

Next week in Advent 2 we will be looking at the prophets who had the same message: *Christ is coming*

Isaiah prophesied in ch 7 *Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel;* The promised Seed was to come as a Baby and is God. Also He would come to be our Saviour
Isaiah 53 says: *Immanuel would be despised and rejected, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities*

Zechariah said: *Behold, your King is coming to you ... riding on a donkey.*

The Old Testament said *Rejoice*, the child, born to be Saviour and King, Immanuel, is on the way *He's coming*

And Christ CAME, just as God said. Remember: We can rely on God's Word, because God keeps his promises

But Advent also says: the promised One is coming *again* in the last day as King and Judge

Let's hear our **New Testament Reading** from Matthew 24:36-44

36 *"No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

37 *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

38 *For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;*

39 *and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

40 *Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.*

41 *Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.*

42 *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*

43 *But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.*

44 *So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

This the Word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Centuries after the promises of Christ's first coming we hear Jesus say three times in Matthew 24 *1, the Son of Man, will come again*

Did you know that the Bible has more to say about Christ's second coming than his first.

Jude (Jesus' step brother!!) pointed to Enoch (Noah's great grandfather in Genesis) who proclaimed: *"In the last days, the Lord is coming with 10,000 angels"* Jude 14

Zechariah, one of the last Old Testament prophets boosted the promise of Christ's first coming in ch 9 *into 'the last days'*. In ch 14 *he says: And in that day ... His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives - which will split in two -*

This word was confirmed by the angels at Jesus ascension in Acts 1, saying: *this same Jesus is coming back here again!*

Jesus the Babe, Jesus the man, Jesus the shepherd, Jesus the Lawgiver, Jesus the Saviour, Jesus the Lord, Jesus the Judge, Jesus the King is coming

All the writers of the New Testament have something to say about Christ's return in the last days; Matthew, Mark, Luke, Peter, John, Jude, James and Paul

Heb 9:26 says *He has appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and to those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time for salvation - for the final deliverance*

Advent is, in fact, three dimensional. It says: 1st Christ **HAS** come. 2nd He **WILL** come. and 3rd He **IS** come
Yes, He is here, now (in church, in your home, on the telephone). He promises (*where people seek Me I will be found; and where 2 or 3 gather together in my name, there am I in the midst*)

This is his promise. He promised to come and to save, to strengthen and to succour all who call on him

- The past is covered by his blood

- the present is illuminated by his presence

- & the future is secured by his grace and glory

Finally, I love what John prophesied in 1Jn 3:3, *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed (when he returns), we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

Hallelujah. Just as Advent came once in Bethlehem so Advent *will* come because He is coming again

Jesus is Coming; he is coming for his own. God promises this in his Word

As the Bible begins with the promise of his coming, the Bible ends with this promise in Rev 22: *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. : He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus*

The whole Bible, from first to last, from Genesis to Revelation, constantly promises *He is coming*

Advent turns our eyes **backwards** to Christ's first coming as the Babe of Bethlehem.

it turns our eyes **forward** to his second coming at the end of time as King and Judge.

and it turns our eyes **upward** to Christ's coming to meet us here and now in worship

It's not an empty phrase to say *The Lord is here, His Spirit is with us*

So, let's open our hearts and voices to welcome him now in order to be ready to meet him then.

Song: Come thou long expected Jesus © Charles Wesley

1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set they people free
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee
2. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
3. Born thy people to deliver; born a child and yet a king;
Born to reign in us for ever; now thy gracious kingdom bring
4. By thine own eternal Spirit, rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

We believe Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again, so let's together say this 3fold declaration of faith

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again

Now let's Pray with the response Your Kingdom come, **Your will be done**

1st we Repent We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, mind and strength Lord have mercy

We confess that we have not loved our neighbour as we love ourselves Christ have mercy

Forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be Lord have mercy
as we turn from our sin we pray: In us: Your Kingdom come **Your will be done**

2nd we Rejoice O LORD, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. In our praise: Your Kingdom come **Your will be done**

3rd we Request in the words of our 2nd Advent 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 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**

-We pray for the world in chaos and crisis. In Your Kingdom come, **Your will be done**
-We pray for the church. May your promised presence fill your church with glory, peace and power, and make us,
your people, a faithful flock who follow you in all your ways in Your Kingdom come, **Your will be done**
-We pray for all who are troubled in body mind and spirit Your Kingdom come, **Your will be done**

Together we pray the **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever Amen

Song: At the name of Jesus © Caroline Maria Noel

1. At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee shall bow, every tongue confess him King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord, who from the beginning was the mighty Word.
2. Humbled for a season to receive a name from the lips of sinners unto who he came;
Faithfully he bore it spotless to the last, brought it back victorious when from death he passed.
3. Truly, this Lord Jesus shall return again, with his Father's glory, with his angel train;
For all wreathes of empire meet upon his brow, and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you

The Lord turn his face toward you and give you his peace and

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you this day and until we see Jesus and then for evermore

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England,

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Is2:1-5

1 ¶ This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

2 In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

3 Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.

5 Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Rom13:11-end

11 ¶ And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.

13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Mtt24:36-44

36 "No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;

39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him

The advent of our king

© Charles Coffin

1. The advent of our King our prayers must now employ

And we with hymns of welcome sing in strains of holy joy

2. The everlasting Son incarnate deigns to be;

Himself a servant's form puts on, to set his servants free

3. Daughter of Sion, rise to meet thy lowly King;

Nor let thy faithless heart despise the peace he comes to bring

4. As Judge, on clouds of light, he soon will come again

And his true members all unite with him in heav'n to reign

5. All glory to the Son who comes to set us free,

With Father, Spirit, ever one though all eternity