

Pastor Nathan Schultz  
Upper Thames Missionary Church  
Advent Week 1 (2) 2021

## A Past and Future Hope

Mark 1:1-8  
Isa. 43:4-7 and 18-21  
Romans 5:1-5

### Why bother with Advent?

-Advent means "coming" or "arrival" and its is focused on both the historical coming of Christ as his Broke into history 2000 years ago as a baby and announce the **inauguration or beginning of His Kingdom**, and also on the future coming of Christ at his return as Lord, King, and Judge to complete or "**consummate**" the kingdom of God.

-The Spirit of Advent is "eager anticipation" - as Romans 8 highlights "all creation groans, awaiting liberation and the sons of God to be revealed.

### key themes to advent

- the parable of the **ten virgins** from matthew 22 is a key parable about the themes Advent highlights.

These ten unmarried women are waiting to join a wedding party making its way to the celebrations from the first part of the ceremony - the groom takes a long time though, and the lights of the "foolish" women are going out, while the 5 that kept their lamps ready are able to join the procession into the feast. (An allegory of the second coming)

The **candles** being lit : Be ready, keep your lamps burning so that when the bridegroom, Christ, returns, you'll be prepared.

The **lights** of the candles also remind us that Christ said "I am the light of the world" and that he is the light who has pierced the darkness.

The **colours**:- **purple** reminds us of royalty, of Christ the Newborn King and the Coming King.

It is also a colour that symbolized suffering - Jesus was dressed in purple robes and humiliated before he was crucified.

We are reminded of the suffering we will all endure in this world.

**Pink**, often the colour of the candle lit in the 3rd week, symbolizes the shift in focus during advent, from Christ coming as a baby to Christ coming as King in Power.

The **White** reminds us of the purity and holiness of the King of Kings. It is the colour of the transfigured Christ's robes on Earth long ago, and the colour of his future robes, stained with his own blood, that Christ is wearing in John's vision of his return in the book of revelation.

On the stage we have worked these **colours and fabrics into a particular shape**, a type of **crown** above the cross

The purples of royalty and suffering, the pink reminding us of his past beginning of the Kingdom and his future consummation, as well as the central white points symbolize the king of King we serve, humble and powerful, Lord of Past, Present and future, and his Goodness and purity. All hanging over the Cross, the shape of our salvation and the shape of the self-sacrificing life he lived and the life we are called to live as we follow him.

---

Three "R's" sum up how these texts weave together.

Mark 1:1-8

Isa. 43:4-7 and 18-21

Romans 5:1-5

### **Recognize, Repent, Receive**

Read Mark 1:1-8 in particular

Recognize:

**Recognize** - John declared that Jesus is the long-awaited coming King

Why its important and we need to recognize and believe in one whom John the Baptist is announcing?

Notice in Mark 1 😊 that John is implying that the coming of Jesus is the coming of the LORD – the one who made and sustains heaven and earth is coming.

Jesus has **authority in another way, too** – he baptizes with the Holy Spirit and Fire (Matthew 3)

1 Chronicles 16:32-33 says:

**32**Let the sea resound, and all that fills it; let the fields exult, and all that is in them. **33**Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth.

Advent reminds us that "Judgement is a good thing for creation"

Judgement is not good for those who ignore the summons of the coming king.

- the biblical meaning of Judgement is far richer that the caricature of God showing up and smashing things in a rage.

Judgement is about rectification – setting things right, restoring the proper order, making things "good" just as they were made in the beginning.

Advent declares that Judgement in the end is a good thing – for everyone who submits to the rightful King eagerly awaits him to set the crooked things straight, and to mend the broken things of this world that human sin and the devil's evils have warped.

## REPENT -

**Repent has become a bad word in this generation – but remember, it means to turn your mind and therefore your whole being from a bad path to the good path – nothing bad about that!**

Advent is the season of remembering that after the long war is waged and all these battles are done, Christ will come and stand in judgement over this rebellious world, and over every wicked thing done in it.

The enemy and his servants will be judged.

By the grace of God, all who **repent (change their mind and heart)** will be shown mercy, for no other reason than God's pure love expressed to us in his Son Jesus Christ.

The judgement is like a baptism by the Holy Spirit and Fire

The Holy Spirit, seals all that belongs to God – no one sealed by the Spirit will be destroyed

- like a dipping into or a baptism into fire – it purified and also destroys.

Advent reminds us Christ is the one who comes to save and purify all who recognize and repent, and he comes to destroy all works of evil

Through our disobedience, we have turned a very good creation into a place of pain and brokenness

-but when Christ returns, instead of thorns and thistles in a desert, the world will be restored and there will be verdant fields and water.

Remember the words read for us earlier in Isaiah 43:

*18 “Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.*

*19 See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.*

*20 The wild animals honor me,  
the jackals and the owls,  
because I provide water in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland,*

*to give drink to my people, my chosen,*

*21 the people I formed for myself  
that they may proclaim my praise.*

## **This is what we RECEIVE - Complete transformation**

A transformation that is possible because of **purification** - it will be like a great fire that burns up the old and destroys it and what is left will be pure and good as God intended (Think of 2 Peter 3:

*10But the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.*

*11Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live **holy and godly** lives **12**as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the **destruction** of the heavens by fire, and the elements will **melt** in the heat. **13**But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a **new heaven** and a **new earth**, where righteousness dwells.*

The point is certainly **not destruction** of people and creation as some people have mistakenly taught. This is about total purification of everything that Christ will bring when he returns. The meaning is traced through John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul and Peter.

Notice, the **earth is still there and is "laid bare"** – its not gone, but every hiding place for evil is uncovered - it is the total uncovering of everything so that what is impure will be burned up - utterly destroyed, and what is left will be refashioned into the new heavens and new earth. Just as the flood of the World with Water was a laying bare and a new start, but it didn't work perfectly, the washing of the world with FIRE will be a perfect and complete resetting.

Creation doesn't long for "destruction" or Romans 8 wouldn't make sense - rather it longs to be **made new, just like each one of us die with Christ - the goal is not to perish, but to pass through and be made new.**

It is no accident that this Advent reading from Mark 1 leaves us with the words about Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit of God is preparing each one of us for what is next. For Advent, for reunion with Him in heaven, and ultimately, for resurrection into a new Creation filled with beauty and hope, in which everything has been set right.

For today, we are called New creations. This means we live every moment God gives us as **messengers** and **examples** of the NEW THING that is coming. By grace, let's let God keep preparing us for what is next.

We **recognize** so we can **repent**, we repent so that we **receive**, we receive so that we **prepare**.