



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of December 2, 2018

We are now in the season of Advent, a time that helps us to remember Christ's first coming and reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation. It also teaches us to look eagerly for His second coming when He will come to redeem His creation and exercise His rule with all power and authority.

Luke 21:25-36 *Redemption is Drawing Near*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Luke 21:25-36](#).

- “Of all the seasons of the church year, Advent most closely mirrors the daily lives of Christians and of the Church, asks the most important ethical questions, presents the most accurate picture of the human condition, and above all, orients us to the future of the God who will come again.” (*Fleming Rutledge*)
- In a very real sense we live in Advent all the time. We live between times. We live between the First Coming and the Second Coming of Christ.
- In the First Coming, Jesus came relatively quietly, in the Second, He will come in worldwide glory. So, right now, “Our lives are hidden with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life appears, then we also will appear with him in glory.” ([Colossians 3:3-4](#))
- In today's passage Jesus is preparing His disciples and us for that reality.
- Jesus tells us in this passage that things are going to get very, very difficult.
- He tells us to be on the look-out, and He tells us to “watch ourselves”.
- The point is that vigilance does not bring about the coming of Jesus. But it is the way He desires for us to live. It is to prepare us for judgment. Judgment does not equal condemnation.
- In just a matter of a few years the place where Jesus stood and said these things would be a smoking ruin surrounded by stacks of dead bodies. This calamity was viewed as a way for the Church to begin to understand the kinds of things that would happen near the end.
- Now, it seems to us that what Advent does is prepare us for Christmas.
- Christmas is so sentimental that we miss the fact that Christmas is a surprising blaze of light shining in impenetrable darkness.
- Christmas is the movement of God into territory that is occupied by the forces of darkness. Over these forces human efforts are in vain. No amount of preparation will change the ultimate fact that we live in a time and place of difficulty and that God must intervene.
- Unless I can come face to face with this, I will cover up my unease with denial.

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play.
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.
(*W.H. Auden*)

- The Advent season and today's text encourages us to resist denial and face our situation as it really is.
- Christ has come. Christ has died. Christ will come again.

[To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons](http://www.wepc.org/archivedsermons)

WEPC Lectionary Project: *Union with Christ*

West End Presbyterian Church is using the Scripture readings recommended by the Revised Common Lectionary as a framework for our corporate worship and our personal and family devotion. This project is part of WEPC's 25th Anniversary Year and will run from December 2018 through November 2019. The Lectionary gives us access to the whole counsel of Scripture and these texts are a means for us to grow in our understanding of our union with Christ.

To learn more and subscribe to a daily email of Daily Scripture Readings, visit www.wepc.org/lectionary

First Sunday of Advent, December 2, 2018

Jeremiah 33:14-16
A Righteous Branch Springs from David

Psalms 25:1-10
To You I Lift Up My Soul

I Thessalonians 3:9-13
Strengthen Hearts of Holiness

Luke 21:25-36
Watch for the Coming of the Son of Man

Reflection on Sunday, December 2

Monday

Numbers 17:1-11
The Budding of Aaron's Rod

II Peter 3:1-18
Growing in Grace

Tuesday

II Samuel 7:18-29
The Flowering of David's Line

Revelation 22:12-16
Jesus as the Fulfillment of David's Line

Wednesday

Isaiah 1:24-31
Warning not to Wither

Luke 11:29-32
The Coming of the Son of Man

Daily

Psalms 90
A Prayer for Life from God

Preparation for Sunday, December 9

Thursday

Malachi 3:5-12
Return to Me

Philippians 1:12-18a
Proclaiming Christ

Friday

Malachi 3:13-18
Those Who Serve God

Philippians 1:18b-26
Paul Rejoices Though Imprisoned

Saturday

Malachi 4:1-6
The Sun of Righteousness Shall Rise

Luke 9:1-6
The Mission of the Twelve

Daily

Luke 1:68-79
God's Tender Compassion