



# RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

## THE WEEKLY BRICK

**November 29, 2009.**

*As you come to him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 2:4-5*

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent

“2012 or Jesus?”

Luke 21:25-36

### **Context:**

*Luke 21:7 Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?” Jesus’ answer to this question is our Gospel lesson for today and is Luke’s discourse on the “signs” concerning the end of time or the second coming of Jesus. The corresponding passages in Matthew (Matthew 24) and Mark (Mark 13) are Jesus’ warnings about future events with His strong encouragement to persevere. Scripture, as well as the ancient creeds of the church, repeatedly affirms that Jesus will one day return to this earth to judge the “living and the dead.” In this passage from Luke, we can see the two-fold nature of the Advent journey: Christians are to “prepare” for Jesus’ second coming while preparing to celebrate His first coming. What does the Bible teach about Jesus and His coming again?*

### **Relevant Scriptures:**

### **What Do We Know? Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Coming Again!**

*Luke 21:25-27 There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. <sup>26</sup>Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

*Daniel 7:13*

*Romans 13:11-2*

*Philippians 4:5*

*1 Peter 4:7*

*Revelation 22:7*

*Revelation 22:12*

### **What Don't We Know? \_\_\_\_\_!**

*Luke 21:29-36 He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. <sup>30</sup>When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. <sup>31</sup>Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>“I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

*Matthew 24:36*

*Hebrews 10:37*

*Romans 16:20*

## What Will Jesus Do? \_\_\_\_\_!

<sup>28</sup>*When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*

*Revelation 20:11-15*

*Romans 2:5-7*

*2 Corinthians 5:9-10*

*Revelation 22:3*

## What Should We Do is Our Response? Be \_\_\_\_\_!

<sup>34</sup>*Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. <sup>35</sup>For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."*

*Mark 13:33-36*

*2 Peter 3:12-13*

*James 5:8*

*(Answers: Is, When, Judge, Ready.)*

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## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

### Advent: The Coming of our Lord

Advent calls us to reflect upon the coming of Jesus into our world. Yesterday, the sermon focused on Jesus' second coming. As we have seen, the "Advent" of Jesus' second coming has been promised by the Prophets, Jesus, and other New Testament writers. This week, we will shift the focus to the promises of Jesus' first coming, as well as some Advent "ponderings" as we prepare for the celebration of our saviors birth. God bless your week!

God's promise to David was that God would save and heal the world through David's lineage. The mystery of life and eternal light, Jesus Christ, has come through David's line born to a virgin. The Eternal Word becomes flesh and blood to save our flesh and blood. God has not forgotten God's people! God's promises are fulfilled! The only death that will remain will be the death of alienation, sorrow, and—death! The divine hope promised through David sleeps in a manger!

#### ☐ Day #1--Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup> Read: 1 Samuel 1:1-18.

In this story we read about the account of Samuel's birth. Samuel acts as a "transition" during the historical period between the judges and the monarchy. Samuel is a prophet of God that also acts as a priest, seer, judge, and a leader. In this part of the account, Hannah is the subject of scorn, misunderstanding and sorrow. Hannah is unable to bear a child which in ancient Israel was a situation of great shame. However, Hannah is promised a child. Now she must wait. As we journey through Advent, waiting is a core theme. The child promised to us will be born. No matter what the circumstances in our lives, whether they are difficult like Hannah's, or we are succeeding in our endeavors, the promised Son will come and call us toward God and God's Lordship in our lives. Hannah was willing to do whatever it took to be blessed by God? Are you?

**Pray and Meditate:** "O Lord of Hosts, if only you will look on...your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant... I lay my life before you today. Take all that I have and use me to your glory. Amen."

☐ **Day #2--Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> Read: 1 Samuel 1:19-28.**

After Hannah prayed, she went back to her home and we are told that “in due time” (v. 20) she conceived. I wonder just what Hannah’s thoughts were after she prayed and waited? The words of Henri Nouwen are challenging:

“I have found it very important in my own life to let go of my wishes and start hoping. It was only when I was willing to let go of wishes that something really new, something beyond my own expectations, could happen to me... To wait open-endedly is an enormously radical attitude toward life. It is trusting that something will happen to us that is far beyond our own imaginings. It is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life. It is living with the conviction that God moulds us according to God’s love and not according to our fear.” (Henri J.M. Nouwen. *Eternal Seasons*. Norte Dame: Sorin Books, 2004, 28).

**Pray and Meditate:** “Jesus, give me the grace to quit wishing and start believing. Give me the wisdom to remember that you work in me according to your love, not according to my fear. Thank you. Amen.”

☐ **Day #3--Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> Read: 1 Samuel 2:1-10.**

Again, we revisit the biblical character, Hannah.

“Here we read the song of Hannah. Hannah praises God for all of God’s faithfulness to her and to the world. Her joy spills over in response to God’s incredible love. The long Advent night is over. The birth of our Savior is near. Our waiting and longing is over and we too sing in joyful response to God. Soon, the Angels will sing, the shepherds will marvel, Herod will tremble, and the world will never be the same. Max Lucado beautifully describes the majesty of Jesus’ birth: “An ordinary night with ordinary shepherds. And were it not for a God who loves to hook an ‘extra’ on the front of the ordinary, the night would have gone unnoticed... But God dances amidst the common. And that night he did a waltz. The night was ordinary no more. The angel came in the night because that is when lights are best seen and that is when they are most needed. God comes into the common for the same reason. His most powerful tools are the simplest.” (Max Lucado. *The Applause of Heaven*. Dallas: Word, 1990, 1996). Remember, God’s promises to you will be fulfilled. God will come and you will sing.

**Pray and Meditate:** Look up Psalm 24. Read this Psalm as your prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God.

☐ **Day #4--Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> Read: Judges 13:2-24.**

Here we have another narrative about the promise of a child and the faithfulness of the mother. Both accounts show the faithfulness of God, the faithfulness of the mothers’, and the power of God to bring life out of barrenness. Notice here, miracles happen when God’s faithfulness and human faithfulness meet. God asks us simply (simply as in not complicated, not necessarily easy!) to take God at His word! When we do, even what we thought was impossible only becomes part of the story of praise that we will tell.

**Reflect:** What is “impossible” in your life right now? Where do you need a miracle? As we near the miracle of Christmas, God asks us to “expect a miracle!”

**Pray and Meditate:** “Heavenly Father, I believe that \_\_\_\_\_ is a seeming impossibility. However Lord, I surrender it to you. Bring life where there is barrenness. Bring hope where there is hopelessness. By Your Holy Spirit, give me the ability to expect a miracle. Thank you, Lord. Amen”

□ **Day #5--Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> Read: Hebrews 8:1-13.**

Jesus is our High Priest. A priest in the Old Testament interceded between God and the people, and between the people and God. Look at verse 10 again. God, through Jesus, has made a covenant with you. The covenant that God makes with you is “written on your heart.” Biblically, the heart is the “executive center” of the person, their will, their spirit. God’s covenant with us orients our whole self and being. We are in Jesus and Jesus is in us. This divine covenant is made possible through the priesthood of Jesus. God also asks us to be priests to one another. As followers of Jesus, we are used by Jesus to speak words of kindness, love, and peace to others. Likewise, Jesus wants us to speak words of kindness, love and peace to Him about others. This happens when we pray for others and “lift them up” before God.

**Reflect:** As the Advent season continues on, take some time and think about the coming of Jesus as God’s *covenant* with you. Jesus embodies the promise that God will write His words and love on your heart so that you can live the life that God has intended for you all along.

**Pray and Meditate:** “Father, you have chosen me and made a covenant with me and written that covenant on my heart. Jesus, you are my priest and you offer before the Father all that I have. Thank you for loving me so much that you would come to earth and show me the love of my heavenly Father. Be near me as Christmas approaches. Amen”

□ **Day #6--Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> Read: Mark 11:1-11.**

We usually read this passage during Holy Week. However, it is very appropriate for Advent as well. Our king is coming! The joy of that day in Jerusalem is our joy at the birth of the baby and the coming of Jesus at the end of history or the end of our lives—whichever comes first! Joy is also an advent theme. Again, I cite Nouwen:

*“Advent is a time of joyful waiting and joyful giving...The period before Christmas has that remarkable quality of joy that seems to touch not only Christians but all who live in our society... During the last week of Advent it seems as if the liturgy can no longer hide the excitement about the coming of the Lord and burst forth in anticipatory joy.”* (Henri Nouwen. *The Genesee Diary*. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1995).

**Pray and Meditate:** “Jesus you are my joy and you are my love. The celebration of your first coming draws near as does the Advent of your second coming! May the joy and excitement of those who waved the palm branches on the street when you first came, be the same response of joy in my life when I recognize that you are working through me now and when you come to take me home. Continue to prepare my heart for all the days that lie ahead. Amen.”

