

The Promised One Comes!

First Week of Advent

What is Advent?

In many places today the terms the Church uses can be confusing or appear archaic. 'Advent' is a word we still use today, as in "The advent of the computer changed the world..." 'Advent' means 'coming' or 'arrival.' During the Christmas season it is easy to see that the 'arrival' being celebrated is Jesus... God.... Coming to save the world.

However, as the texts for this day indicate, it is not only a celebration of Jesus' arrival as an infant, but also a hopeful expectation of Jesus' return, as he promised to do. He came once in weakness, he will come again in glory. God promised a savior, and the savior came. Jesus promised to return, return he will.

There have been many differences of opinions in the Christian church about the nature of Jesus' second coming. Our passages for this week suggest one thing that all can agree on: Jesus calls us to be ready. What does 'be ready' mean? For one thing, it means to behave as though Jesus might come *this very hour*.

Because he might.

*Marana tha!**

*1 Corinthians 16:22,
Aramaic for "Come, O Lord."

THE FACTS OF THE FAITH

Selected readings
this week:

Old Testament: Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus told his disciples to be ready at any time and also warned them about false 'Christs.' There had already been some (eg. Acts 5:33-38). Like the flood (Matt 24:37), the coming of the real Christ will be impossible to miss.

Biblical Language Insight:

Matt. 24:42 'keep watch'

γρηγορεῖτε (*gray-gor-yoo'-o*)

to watch, to take heed lest some destructive calamity suddenly overtake you.

Source: Crosswalk.com

St. Augustine Describes his Conversion after Opening to Today's Reading in Romans 13:11-14

"I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl I know not which--coming from the neighboring house, chanting over and over again, 'Tolle, lege; tolle, lege; pick it up, read it.'" Immediately I ceased weeping and ... damming the torrent of my tears, I got to my feet, for I could not but think that this was a divine command to open the Bible and read the first passage I should light upon. So I quickly returned to the bench where ... I had put down the apostle's book ... I snatched it up, opened it, and in silence read the paragraph on which my eyes first fell: "... not in sexual immorality or debauchery... Rather clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ..." I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away." Augustine's Confessions. Bk 8, chp 7.



The Old City of Jerusalem

Both of the Old Testament readings talk about Jerusalem, or Mt. Zion. In Isaiah 2:3 we read the beckoning. "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord." In fact, the Scriptures often talk about going 'up' to Jerusalem. This is because Jerusalem is situated on a high hill surrounded by several deep valleys, the Hinnom, Kidron, and Tyropoeon. The Mt. of Olives, where the Garden of Gethsemane was located, was on the other side of the Kidron Valley, and Jesus would have been able to see the torches of the men coming to arrest him from a distance.



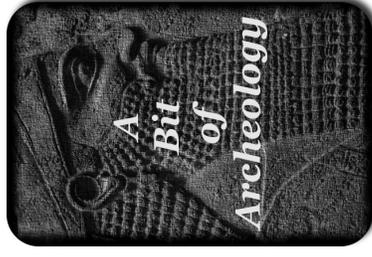
Jerusalem was called the "Mountain of the Lord" but this wasn't merely because it was a difficult city to overcome, but because the temple was built there and was where God was present.

Jerusalem seems to have always been associated with the presence of God. As early as the 19th century BC the city appears in Egyptian and Semitic records as Urusalim, or 'uru' (city) and 'salim' (a Divine name). This was long before David captured the city. Indeed, it was out of Salem that the priest and king, Melchizedek brought out bread and wine to Abram after Abram rescued Lot (Genesis 14:18, also see Psalm 110 and Hebrews 5).

Primary Sources: *The Moody Atlas of the Bible.*

The House of David Inscription.

For years and years Christians have had to put up with claims rolling out of various academic institutions insisting that the historicity of the Bible simply cannot be trusted. For example, who could believe that David captured Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-9) when David didn't even exist? Of course, David was just an invention of nationalistic Jews many centuries later! Not so fast. In 1994, an *Assyrian*, 9th Century BC stone listing Assyria's enemies listed the 'house of David' as one of them. We should be skeptical of the claims of scholars who have their minds made up to distrust the Bible before they even start their work.



Advent- Year A - Week 1.

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