

Today is the second Sunday of Advent,
the beginning of a new Christian year.

We are endeavoring to regain the ancient
perspective of the Advent season: the
second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- ▶ Our most critical need is to recover an expectation of Christ's return and to live our lives as people who are preparing for eternity.

Matthew 24.30-51

Matthew 25

Ready or Not, He is Coming!

Jesus' "Coming" Theology

Matthew 24 & 25

Second Sunday of Advent

The Eschatological Jesus—

- ▶ Jesus began his ministry with an eschatological call to action:
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
- ▶ Jesus concluded his ministry with an eschatological warning:
“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

- ▶ At the end of the first century, Jesus sent eschatologically focused letters to churches, reminding them:
“I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”
- ▶ After giving full disclosure about the eschatological future, Jesus concluded the Bible by emphasizing:
“I am the Beginning and the End . . . Do not add or take away from the words of this prophecy. Yes, I am coming soon.”

Jesus' "Coming" Theology

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done." (Revelation 22.12)

- (1) Regardless of how improbable, the coming of Christ is absolutely certain.
- (2) The coming of Christ cannot be predicted, but it must be anticipated at any and all times.
- (3) Despite their understanding of Christ's return, many will be unprepared, having squandered their opportunities to be ready.

(4) Every person will be required to give an account of how they have lived and what they have done with:

- ▶ the resources and opportunities entrusted to them;
- ▶ their knowledge of Christ and his will;
- ▶ their faithfulness as servants.

(5) Everyone will be judged to determine whether they were an authentic follower of Christ. Many will be disqualified.

(6) The disqualified will go away to eternal punishment; the qualified will go to share in Christ's eternal life.

The Ultimate Reality

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.” (Matthew 25.31)

From the time of Adam and Eve, humanity has been embracing a false narrative and an alternate reality. The Ultimate Reality remains constant—“The heavens declare the glory of God”—but humanity has chosen, as Adam and Eve did, to believe a false narrative; we have “exchanged the glory of the immortal God” in whose image we were created, for an alternate reality: a reality that exalts self and is focused on the here and now, and not on eternity.

This was the case for the people in Noah's era:

“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 . . .

and it was catastrophic for them:

“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.” (Matthew 24.37-39)

To live without an eschatological perspective is insanity!

Here in his final sermons, Jesus emphasized that he is coming in his glory and will sit on his glorious throne, judging the people of all nations (24.30; 25.31-32). The primary effect of his “coming in glory” will be that “peoples of the earth will mourn” when they see him. This effect was foretold by the prophet Zechariah (12.10) and is emphasized again in the opening verses of Revelation—

“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”

and “every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him”;

and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”

So shall it be! Amen. (Revelation 1.7)

“glory” – Gr. *doxa*: from *dokea*: to think, recognize; Glory

- ▶ Theologically, “glory” is the sum of God’s infinite perfections. It includes God’s perfect nature and His perfect mind or understanding. God is the measure of all that is true, right, and good.
- ▶ Experientially, glory is the recognition, the apprehension, of all that God is and living in accord with that truth.
- ▶ The reality is that all humanity has fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3.23); we are not what God intended us to be; we lack His image and character, and we do not do what He intended us to do.

Mourned or Marvelled?

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” (John 17.24)

Jesus’ desire was that his followers would see his glory, his infinite and eternal perfection—and yet he made it clear that many would mourn, not marvel, when he returns in the full manifestation of his glory. His death was to redeem us from our fallen state and restore us to his likeness so that we can live for his glory. The question is: are you pursuing his glory as your ultimate reality?

“I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. . . .
How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but
do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? (John 5.41, 44)

Behind disinterest in seeking the glory of God is a devaluing of
God himself as the greatest treasure in the universe and the
highest purpose in one's life.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

(Colossians 3.1-4)

- ▶ Is Christ your life, or is your life your life?
- ▶ Do you live, like Jesus, to do the will and work of God, or is your time and energy expended on your work?
- ▶ Are you content with yourself, or discontent and consumed with longing and ambition to be like Jesus?

Second Sunday of Advent

Come!

Yes, I am coming soon.