

Today is the first Sunday of Advent
and begins a new Christian year.

As Christians, we mark time and live life
according to God's purposes in Christ—
not according to a “my life” perspective.

“advent” (Latin *adventus*) - presence; coming, arrival

- ▶ advent translates to the Greek word “parousia”
- ▶ “parousia” occurs 24 times in the NT; six times it is used to denote a person’s arrival— a person’s presence in contrast to their absence; the remaining 18 times, it has an *eschatological* (future things) meaning, referring to the second coming of Christ

But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . [and] he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9.26, 28)

- ▶ Originally, there was little connection between the Advent season and Christmas; originally Advent was a 40 day season of preparation for baptism on the Feast of Epiphany.
- ▶ In the 6th century, when the church in Rome connected Advent to the Christmas season, it was with an emphasis on the second coming of Christ, not the first.

- ▶ In the following centuries, Advent became connected to the first coming of Christ rather than the second. This change is, in reality, a loss of perspective reflected in the fact that most Christians are living for “now” instead of living for Christ’s second coming— a preoccupation that Jesus warned would be the prevalent lifestyle (Matthew 24.37-39), leaving most unprepared for his return.

- ▶ 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.

A Common but Critical Word

Revelation 22

First Sunday of Advent

“come/coming” – Gr. *erchomai* (632x)

- ▶ “Where is he who is born the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” (Matthew 2.2)
- ▶ I planned many times to come to you. (Romans 1.10)
- ▶ Timothy has just now come to us. (1 Thessalonians 3.6)
- ▶ Do your best to come to me quickly. (2 Timothy 4.9)

In contrast to *erchomai*—

- ▶ love (agape/agapeo) appears in the NT 259 times;
- ▶ peace (eirene), 92 times,
- ▶ salvation (soteria), 46 times.

“Come” is a common, everyday word.

But among those common uses are very significant uses—

- ▶ “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.” (Matthew 6.10)
- ▶ “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (Matthew 9.13)
- ▶ “If anyone would come after me . . .” (Matthew 16.24)
- ▶ “This same Jesus will come back.” (Acts 1.11)
- ▶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11.26)

Most critical, however, are the eschatological references, many of which were made by Jesus himself—

- ▶ “When you see the Son of man coming in his kingdom . . .”
(Matthew 16.27)
- ▶ “Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know in what day your Lord will come.” (Matthew 24.42)
- ▶ Because of these the wrath of God is coming. (Colossians 3.6)
- ▶ For in just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay. (Hebrews 10.37)

In the last chapter of the Bible, come/coming (erchomai) appears seven times, all in reference to the parousia, the second coming of Jesus. In three instances it is Jesus himself who declares that he is “coming soon” (vss. 7, 11, 20). A fourth reference is the Spirit and the bride expressing mutual longing for the coming of Jesus. In two references, it is an invitation to those who long for the free gift of grace. In the final reference, it is the Apostle John, having seen all that the future holds, expressing his longing for the return of Jesus.

My question to you today is:
where is your heart and your life-orientation
in relation to the promised coming of Christ?

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. (22.14-15)

“Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.” (22.10-11)

But when grace is shown to the wicked,
they do not learn righteousness;
even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil
and do not regard the majesty of the LORD.

Isaiah 26.10

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

And let the one who hears say, "Come!"

Let the one who is thirsty come;

and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

Revelation 22.17

Yet I hold this against you:
You have forsaken the love you had at first.
Consider how far you have fallen!
Repent and do the things you did at first.
If you do not repent, I will come to you
and remove your lamp stand from its place.

Revelation 2.3-5

Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!

For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.

Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear.”

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)

Revelation 19:7-8

Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me . . . (2 Timothy 4.8-10)

My question to you today is:
where is your heart and your life-orientation
in relation to the promised coming of Christ?

Does your way of life reveal that you are longing for and living for the appearing of Christ? Or does it reveal that you love this world and are living for what it has to offer?