Advent 1 (B)| November 29, 2026

Isaiah 64:1-9; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18; Mark 13:24-37

The Coming and Going of Christ

THE WORD | <10 MINS

Read aloud the whole passage at least once.

Mark 13:24-37

> 24 "But in those days, after that suffering,
> the sun will be darkened,
> and the moon will not give its light,
> 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven,
> and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

26 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. 27 Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 28 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 2 "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35 Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, 36 or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

KEY TERMS |

- **Son of Man** – A title for Jesus in the Gospels. In Mark, the Son of Man is a title drawn from Daniel 7:13-14, "As I watched the night visions, I saw one like a human being [sometimes translated 'Son of Man'] coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed." This title highlights Jesus's earthly and divine power from his two natures: human and divine.
- **Fig Tree** – This reference calls back to the fig tree parable in Mark 11:12-14, 20-21, which was a "deed of power," interwoven with the cleansing of the temple that follows that chapter. Figs would not have been ripe in the spring, as Jesus enters Jerusalem, as they are a summer fruit. This asynchronous reference highlights the attention to time and signs in this chapter.

CONTEXT |

- **Markan Primacy**: Between 66 and 70 CE the Gospel of Mark was written down, perhaps in response to the Jewish war with Rome, which culminated in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. The first of our four Gospels to be written, it established that these followers of Jesus have their own Messianic story. Along with oral tradition, the author may have had access to written accounts of certain of Jesus's parables or anecdotes. The other Gospels were recorded later, which means those Gospel authors were able to refer to it. That precedence makes the moments where the other Gospels differ, significant.
- **Coming up in Advent**: Each Sunday in Advent during year B, we will get to hear parts of Mark, John, and Luke's first chapters: John the Baptist as fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy of a messenger; John the Baptist's call to baptize and witness; and Mary's assent to the angel Gabriel. This is the only week of Advent in year B when the Gospel reading speaks to Christ's second coming, rather than his first. We start this Advent with the end of the story: "Christ will come again."

BIG PICTURE | <15 MINS

With the exception of a few stories that slow things down a moment (the widow's mite, the blessing of the children), Mark's Gospel marches forward with ferocious energy from the moment in Chapter 8 when Jesus foretells his death. Jesus gallops toward Jerusalem in this shorter Gospel. In this passage, we find Jesus in Jerusalem, which falls right before we hear about the plot to kill him.

This community of believers around Mark thought that Jesus would return within their lifetime. When he did not, the other Gospel writers and communities began writing letters (which we now know as the Epistles) built their shifting expectation into their writings. In this chapter from Mark, Jesus pulls on prophecy from Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, 2nd Esdras, 2nd Peter, and Revelation – that is a lot of prophecy! Looking at the evidence of time's passage, his followers now accepted what is known as the "delayed *Parousia*," a Greek word meaning "coming" or "arrival."

Second coming predictions are not a part of our own Anglican theology or history, but we certainly hear about them in the broader culture. It is easy to hear in today's Gospel passage echoes of popular stories about Christ's coming in power, even if those stories are not Biblical. It can be hard to avoid layering such prophecies onto our own time, especially when there is destruction, war, and grave disappointment all around us. We are wise to listen closely: "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Making sense of the prophecy of Jesus's return is part of the work of this passage, and it is where we start our celebration of Advent: Christ will come again.

- With the inevitable changes and chances of life, how will we stay awake to the signs God has for us: signs of his being with us, signs of his coming into the world in all the ways God, the Trinity, does? What do you see?
- End times predictions can be scary. How have you encountered these in your life? What helps you stay rooted in what we know of God in Christ?
- What do you think about all this attention to time: the future coming of Christ, the fig tree is not in season, not knowing the day or hour, this invitation to keep awake, the way this passage is right before the plot to kill Jesus is revealed and his final earthly days begin? In this season how are you being called to be attentive to time?

DEEPER MEANING | <15 MINS

In a parish context, I often served as an unofficial translator between generations. Younger and elder Christians sought to grow in relationship with one another, but didn't always have a starting place. In my work I became a trusted friend and deep listener across age and experience. Honored to share the "why" of certain expressions of faith as best I could, I always relished when I saw relationships grow across difference.

I remember one conversation arising around Advent for several years: It was not unusual to hear an elder say, "Why are young people's spiritualities seemingly so much more serious and perhaps sad than mine now, and my memory of when I was younger? When I was young, I was excited about life. I was happy and didn't dwell in the harder things unless I had to."

For some people, Advent's themes—and the frequent labels for Advent Sundays and the Advent candles of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love—ring true and point them to Christ. For others, the themes illuminated particularly in the medieval period —the Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell—ring true and point them to Christ. We can lend each other different visions of the hope of Christ.

A passage like this one illuminates that Christians do not have to be afraid of the dark. The salvation arc tends toward reconciliation of all things in Christ. God Incarnate, whom we will meet as a baby in the season to come, is more powerful and his ministry more earthshattering than we can comprehend. Advent and Easter are yoked together, as this passage highlights: Christ is being born, and also, Christ has died; Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.

- Do you find Advent hopeful? What hopes do you hold? Where do you experience that hope?
- What yearnings do you have for the unfolding of this Advent season, this year?
- The already-and-not-yet nature of the Christian life—living and yearning at the same time—is quite unique. What does this mean for you right now? Where are you in this tension?

INVITATION | <10 MINS

Hope can be a rugged thing, as the Rev. Pauli Murray wrote in her poem, "Verse 8" in her volume *Dark Testament:* "Hope is a song in a weary throat." Looking with clear eyes at the suffering and joy of the real world right now is a faithful thing. We don't have to—and shouldn't gloss over—either suffering or joy.

As you follow Christ through this Advent, I invite you to check out a few resources: If you want to dwell more in the now and future coming of Christ, the book of sermons *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ* by Fleming Rutledge is a great companion. Praying the Litany based on the O Antiphons (available in the *Saint Augustine's Prayer Book* or *Prayers for One Another*, both published by Forward Movement) can inspire us to accompany those who yearn for deliverance, freedom, and peace, or find ourselves in our yearning comforted. Or explore this treasure trove of Advent practices for individuals and groups curated by Building Faith: https://buildfaith.org/advent/

If you are in relationship across generations, listen closely to others' experience and their "why" and "how" of abiding with Christ in all seasons. Support the lonely, or the overburdened in small ways, as you can. Embrace "the more the merrier" of the season. If you are in a season of joy, pray nightly that God will shield the joyous. If you are in a season of praying "how long, O Lord?" may God bless you with peace and support in the changes and chances of life. God is with us, *and* will come again.

- What Advent practices—an Advent wreath, candle lighting, prayers or reading, practices of giving or slowing down —support you staying awake to this season?
- What prayer or practice or relationship intention might draw you more deeply into hope, even in the midst of real life and real suffering?

CLOSING PRAYER | <5 MINS

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.. *Amen.*

– *Book of Common Prayer*

"Heaven and Earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."
– Mark 13:31

ABOUT THE AUTHOR |

The Rev. Taylor P. Devine joined Forward Movement's Center for Discipleship and Renewal (Cedar) team in early 2026, where she supports diocesan and congregational leaders as they grow Christians in their unique contexts. Based in Tucson, Arizona, she is available to consult on Forward Movement offerings and other resources around the church that support discipleship, small groups, formation, and congregational vitality. Her prior ministries included leading intergenerational ministry, navigating generational change dynamics, cultivating congregational vitality, along with developing and leading intentional Christian communities committed to service, prayer, and neighboring.

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