

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:** November 29, 2009 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

**Title:** “Where are You?”

**Text:** Genesis 3:8, 9, 21

**Theme:** God is here; let us celebrate and affirm His presence.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

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### **What is Advent?**

The word 'Advent' is from the Latin '*Adventus*,' which means '**coming**.' Advent is the beginning of a new liturgical year (in the Western churches), and encompasses the span of time from the fourth Sunday before Christmas, until the Nativity of Our Lord is celebrated. The first Sunday of Advent is the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle (which is November 30<sup>th</sup>), and so it will always fall somewhere between November 27<sup>th</sup> at the earliest and December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the latest. The liturgical color for this season is purple (Usually a deep purple as opposed to the lighter, red-violet shade of purple associated with Lent).

**Like Lent, Advent is a preparatory season. It has significance because it is a season of looking forward and waiting for something greater,** both for the annual celebration of the event of Christ's birth and for the time when Christ will come again.

Advent calls us back to the substance. Life, as shadow, speaks to something greater. The shadow is good, but the substance is better. It is the routine and function of life that can slow us down in our pursuit of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Advent enables us to remember and to long for the blessed return of God to reign directly and put away sin forever within our experience.

The seasonal calendar of Advent, Lent and Pentecost function as alarm clocks that awaken us from our robotic existence and passionless pursuits. They seek to move us from mechanical activity to intentional search. They are designed to open our eyes and clear our ears to see and hear God in life.

### **Introduction:**

Advent presupposes absence. One comes who was absent. It is a coming that speaks to anticipation and preparation. It is marked by celebration and joy, longing and fulfillment. It speaks to a thirst quenched, a hunger satisfied, and a longing met.

When God wrote His story He put elements of thirst, hunger and longing into play. He also wrote the story in such a way that the need could not be self-satisfied. In fact, the need could/would only be met by something outside of the individual. It would be incapable of being met by work or merit. It could/would only be satisfied by the gracious response of the need-granter to that of the recipient.

Woven into the story are shadows of the greater need-granter. He gives the shadow to show the true greatness of the substance; if the shadow produces joy, how much greater the substance. Unfortunately, along the way His people would seek the shadow over the substance and become entangled in the shadow. The shadow can never meet the need. It only speaks to something greater.

God has written the story. It is contained in the Bible and played out on the stage of life. The story speaks of coming, waiting and arrival. We see this theme throughout the Bible.

*The Westminster Confession* speaks to this idea in the chapter 8 section 1.

It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only-begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Savior of his Church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world; unto whom he did, from all eternity, give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

There are two ideas I wish us to note in our Advent season. **First**, God is coming and that coming is still future although I believe imminent. **Second**, although there is an eschatological coming, God is now here. He comes in shadow to meet with His people daily. His omnipresence guarantees that He is here in our midst. Not only do I wait for Him to come in the fullness of His story, but I also wait for His arrival today, right now, in this moment.

My anticipation is caused by two yearnings, to be delivered from my present fallen condition and to simply enjoy His presence. My heart yearns for Him. It is not simply needs that drives my passions, but want. I want God. Today I want us to see the larger eschatological yearning for God's arrival but also the daily yearning that all of His children have for Him.

### **THE BIG PICTURE:**

Remember the following four "chapters" within the story of God?

- Creation is for His Glory - The Power of God
- Transgression is for His Glory - The Mystery of God
- Condemnation is for His Glory - The Justice of God
- Redemption is for His Glory - The Grace of God

**Advent Prayer:** The Book of Common Prayer

### **First Sunday of Advent**

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.*

### **The Storyline:**

God wrote a story in which arrival and waiting are a part of its elements. Each element heightens the arrival and waiting aspect of the relationship that exists between God and His people. God arrives and His people enjoy His arrival.

**The Problem:**

God said He would meet with us each and every day. He said He is coming. How are we anticipating His arrival? From the time God created Adam and Eve to that of the Fall an undermined amount of time passes. We do not know how long this period lasted. Yet each and every day Adam and Eve would anticipate and wait for God's arrival. How did they mark their lives?

Between Genesis 3 and 4, Cain and Abel grow into manhood. How many decades are marked? In Genesis 4:17 our text tells us that "Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived." Genesis 5 speaks of descendants and generations. My point in noting this is to show how life passed from days, to weeks, forming months and years. Years formed decades and decades formed centuries. Yet in all of this God would visit His people, and they would wait for this visitation. Not only was there the shadow of His coming, but there would also be the substance. How did they wait? Do you think they would become consumed by trying to live? Do you think they would be distracted from waiting and thinking God's thoughts? I think so. And I think the Holy Spirit would remind them of His arrival and call them to remember and to wait. This is what we are called to and is to mark our celebration of Advent.

**Questions:**

1. How might we prepare for His arrival on a daily basis?
2. How does the promise of His coming change the way we live life?
3. God is here; where are we?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know He is here.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to celebrate and enjoy His presence in our midst.

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His promise to be present.

**Outline:**

- I. The Garden speaks to the Hero's Coming (Gen. 1:26-30; 2:15-25; 3:8)

The author wishes us to believe there is a real relationship between God and His people. This relationship is marked by intimacy and ease. This is what sin will destroy.

Genesis 3:8 identifies the time of day in which God met with His people -- In the cool of the day-literally, "the breeze of the day," the evening.

Everyday God would walk with Adam and Eve in the garden. I believe Adam and Eve looked forward to God's visitation, to His arrival, and they waited with anticipation His coming. It is safe for us to presuppose this visitation was daily. There was nothing that darkened this union. There was never reluctance on their part toward His visits. They longed for His visits.

Each one of His visits refreshed and encouraged. They were uplifting and life filled. But each anticipated visit included waiting.

“It is very likely that God used to converse with them in the garden, and that the usual time was the decline of the day, in the evening breeze; and probably this was the time that our first parents employed in the more solemn acts of their religious worship, at which God was ever present. The time for this solemn worship is again come, and God is in his place; but Adam and Eve have sinned, and therefore, instead of being found in the place of worship, are hidden among the trees!”<sup>1</sup>

“The divine Being appeared in the same manner as formerly--**uttering the well-known tones of kindness, walking in some visible form (not running hastily, as one impelled by the influence of angry feelings)**. How beautifully expressive are these words of the familiar and condescending manner in which He had hitherto held intercourse with the first pair.”<sup>2</sup>

Consider a waiting that is unmarred by sin’s presence. It is the kind of waiting that marks a child’s innocent enthusiasm for the arrival of his grandparents before it is cluttered by so much selfishness.

## II. The Fall speaks to the Hero’s Coming (Gen. 3:15)

The Fall is what disrupts the intimacy and ease that marked the relationship between God and His people. In the Fall, God speaks of another coming whereby the fullness of His story will be realized. This coming is preceded by waiting. The Fall introduces the element of impatience and agitation in the waiting, but waiting is still a part of the story. God restores what was lost, but now sin is the unwelcome and unwanted third party.

“God said there would be a perpetual struggle between satanic forces and mankind. It would be between Satan and the woman, and their respective offspring or ‘seeds.’ Satan would ripple mankind (you will strike at his heel), but *the* Seed, Christ, would deliver the fatal blow (He will crush your head).”<sup>3</sup>

“The snake is represented by his ‘seed.’ A plot is established that will take the author far beyond this or that snake and his ‘seed.’ It is what the snake and his ‘seed’ represent that lies at the center of the author’s focus. Verse 15 still contains a puzzling yet important ambiguity: Who is the ‘seed’ of the woman? It seems obvious that the purpose of his verse has not been to answer that question but rather to raise it. The remainder of the book is the author’s answer.”<sup>4</sup>

God answers the question in type where the great anti-type appears in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

“But we are not to look for merely literal meanings here: it is evident that Satan, who actuated this creature, is alone intended in this part of the prophetic declaration. But there is a deeper meaning in the text than even this, especially in these words, it shall bruise thy head, or rather, HE; who? The seed of the woman; the person is to come by the woman, and by her alone,

without the concurrence of man. Therefore the address is not to Adam and Eve, but to Eve alone; and it was in consequence of this purpose of God that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin; this, and this alone, is what is implied in the promise of the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent. Jesus Christ died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Thus he bruises his head-destroys his power and lordship over mankind, turning them from the power of Satan unto God; Ac 26:18. And Satan bruises his heel-God so ordered it, that the salvation of man could only be brought about by the death of Christ; and even the spiritual seed of our blessed Lord have the heel often bruised, as they suffer persecution, temptation, which may be all that is intended by this part of the prophecy.”<sup>5</sup>

“A gracious promise is here made of Christ as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan. By faith in this promise, our first parents, and the patriarchs before the flood, were justified and saved; and to this promise, and the benefit of it, instantly serving God day and night they hoped to come. Notice is here given them of three things concerning Christ. (1.) His incarnation, that he should be the seed of the woman. (2.) His sufferings and death, pointed at in Satan's bruising his heel, that is, his human nature. (3.) His victory over Satan thereby. Satan had now trampled upon the woman, and insulted over her; but the seed of the woman should be raised up in the fullness of time to avenge her quarrel, and to trample upon him, to spoil him, to lead him captive, and to triumph over him, Col 2:15.”<sup>6</sup>

“Here a blessed promise lies like a pearl in a shell. The serpent's curse is for us a blessing, for Jesus our Savior is therein foretold.”<sup>7</sup>

The waiting is now marked by promise and shadow. God has promised that He will take care of the sin issue once and for all. He will foreshadow what this looks like in Genesis 3:21.

“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21).

We know the fulfillment of the promise is Christ. This is the language used by the New Testament to show the promise and its fulfillment.

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, **that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil**” (Heb. 2:14).

The Lord asks a question of Adam and Eve that I believe He is still asking of us today, “**Where are you** (Gen. 3:9)?” Each and every day God shows up. He is in your life, but somehow “the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:19). These things rob us of affirming His presence in our midst.

I believe right now as we enter into the Advent season the Holy Spirit is asking each of us the simple question, “Where are you?” Friend, let us seek to honestly answer the question and

begin to lay aside every weight and sin that so easily entangles us and let us determine to run the race with endurance by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:1, 2).

**Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)**

1. Are you waiting for God's arrival?
2. Do you wait for Him to show up each day?
3. Are you preparing for and making provision for His arrival?
4. Do you believe He will keep His promise and show up on time?

*The Revised Common Lectionary* (a service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library)

- Thematic

God of justice and peace, from the heavens you rain down mercy and kindness, that all on earth may stand in awe and wonder before your marvelous deeds. Raise our heads in expectation that we may yearn for the coming day of the Lord and stand without blame before [you in] your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

- Intercessory

We seek the mighty God in the most unlikely places as a child in a stable, and in an empty tomb. May [You] hear these prayers, which come from the unlikely [object of earthen vessels].

*Prayers of the People, concluding with:*

Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes to watch, that we may know your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on Genesis 3:8.

<sup>2</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown* on Genesis 3:8.

<sup>3</sup> Allen P. Ross, "Genesis," *BKC*, 33.

<sup>4</sup> John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," *EBC*, 2:55.

<sup>5</sup> *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on Genesis 3:15.

<sup>6</sup> *John Wesley* on Genesis 3:15.

<sup>7</sup> *Charles Spurgeon* on Genesis 3:15.