

- **Advent**- 4 weeks leading up to Christmas when we prepare our hearts for arrival of Jesus
- **Will use lectionary readings** –
 - **Lectionary** – selection of Bible passages tied to Christian calendar; typical Sunday has a Psalm, an Old Testament reading, a New Testament reading, and a Gospel reading
- **Revised Common Lectionary** – link to daily readings through Advent season (Psalm, OT, and NT)
- **Today's readings:**
 - Isaiah 2:1-5
 - Psalm 122
 - Romans 13:11-14
 - Matthew 24:36-44



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Sunday, November 30

Background

- Prophecy given during reign of King Uzziah (792-740)
- Written to Judah –
 - prospering economically under Uzziah
 - spiritually complacent (lack of trust in God, inattention to covenant responsibilities)
 - living under constant threat of Assyrian invasion

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- **Setting of prophecy** – in The Last Days; time when Jews looked forward to God acting decisively in history vindicating God's people (them) and destroying God's enemies (the nations); the arrival of the Messiah is a key feature of The Last Days

- **What will happen in The Last Days?**

- **Mountain of the Lord will be established as the highest mountain** – Yahweh will be exalted as supreme over all other gods
- **Other nations will come to Yahweh** – each nation had its own god so for nations to come to the mountain of the Lord is a rejection of their own gods and acceptance of Yahweh as their God
 - **Note** – they are coming to the Mountain of Yahweh because they want to follow Him (He will teach us His ways so we can walk in His paths)

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- What will happen to those nations that come to the mountain of Yahweh?
 - They will be taught by God – they are accepted by Yahweh
 - Their disputes will be judged by God – end result is peace
 - Expression of trust - so yielded to Yahweh and so trusting in His wisdom, judgement, and power, that they disarm themselves
- Command - Come let us walk in light of the Lord
 - speaking to the Jews, God's people
 - Light of the Lord – revelation/truth of God
 - About the past – truth God has already given to His people
 - Walking in this light = obedience
 - About the future – what Isaiah has just told them God will do in The Last Days concerning the nations
 - Walking in this light = trust

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- Come let us walk in the light of the Lord
 - About the past – truth God has already given to us;
 - Live up to what we have already attained
 - Light is ultimately a person = Jesus (Light of the World)
 - Walking in this light = obedience to Jesus words and character (living as He did/would)

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- **Come let us walk in the light of the Lord**
 - **About the future** – what God says He will do
- **Rev 21.1-5:** Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”
 - **Walking in this light = trust**

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- If walking in the light of the Lord with an orientation towards the past is remembering – we are looking back on what God has said/done and living accordingly in the present
- Then walking in the light of the Lord with an orientation towards the future is hope – we are looking forward to what God has said He will do and living accordingly in the present
 - **Hope** - Confident expectation of a better future rooted in conviction that:
 - God will work all things together for the good of those who love Him
 - God will make all things new
 - Jesus will return
 - Fundamentally – hope is rooted in God's character; if we trust Him to keep His word/do what He said He will do then we can be confident about a better future

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- **Hope is not a strategy?** Depends
 - Hope the way we understand it as wishful thinking is not a strategy, often a way of avoiding difficult decisions and hard work
 - NT hope is absolutely a strategy – confidence in God keeping His promises is the best strategy
- **Hope is risky?** Yes and no
 - **Yes** – hope deferred makes the heart sick; if our hope is tied to:
 - **our timing of ‘future’** – we will be disappointed at times
 - **our expectations of ‘better’** – we will be disappointed at times
 - **No** – if our hope is tied
 - **God’s timing of ‘future’** – eternal perspective
 - **God’s definition of ‘better’** – more like Jesus
- **Hope requires courage** - expression of deep trust in the Lord

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