

Isaiah 64:1-9 - 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 - Mark 13:24-37

The season of Advent seems to have come upon us rapidly this year, it is a time of opportunity to reflect on our spiritual journey to re-assess where we are on our pathway to the Lord. Originally the Advent season like Lent was a period of prayer, reading scripture and fasting. Now in our twenty-first century little attention is given to spiritual preparation for this season.

The readings this coming Sunday cause confusion to many peoples understanding of Advent, as these passages of scripture look to the end of time. They do not speak of the Birth at Bethlehem but focus our attention on the 'Second Coming.'

Mark's writing very much reflects Jewish history and Jewish ideas. As Jesus spoke to the disciple he used imagery very familiar to them, but that appears strange to us in the twenty-first century. Jesus' words as he spoke to the disciples are stark.

*"In those day after the suffering, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory,"* words that echo Daniel chapter 7.

The coming of the Christ child is all about light shining in darkness, a light for which we must prepare, a light that never goes out. The birth of the baby enables us not to be overcome by fear or despair but awake, alert for what will come.

The passage from 1 Corinthians has the similar theme of anticipation for the day of the Lord's return. Paul says to the Corinthians *"be thankful for all God has given you, do not be lacking in any spiritual gift."*

Despite all we have experienced these past months may our Advent journey be fruitful and inspiring! May we, like the Prophets keep awake to the Lord's coming, not just to the baby in the manger but to the last day. As we look to the celebrations of Christmas and anticipation of times to come let us be thankful for all that God gives us. Keep awake!