



MDPC

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

St. Prichard

COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS

Come, Thou long ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to set
Born Thy peo - ple to de liv - er, Born a child

2019 Advent Devotional

From the Gospel of Luke

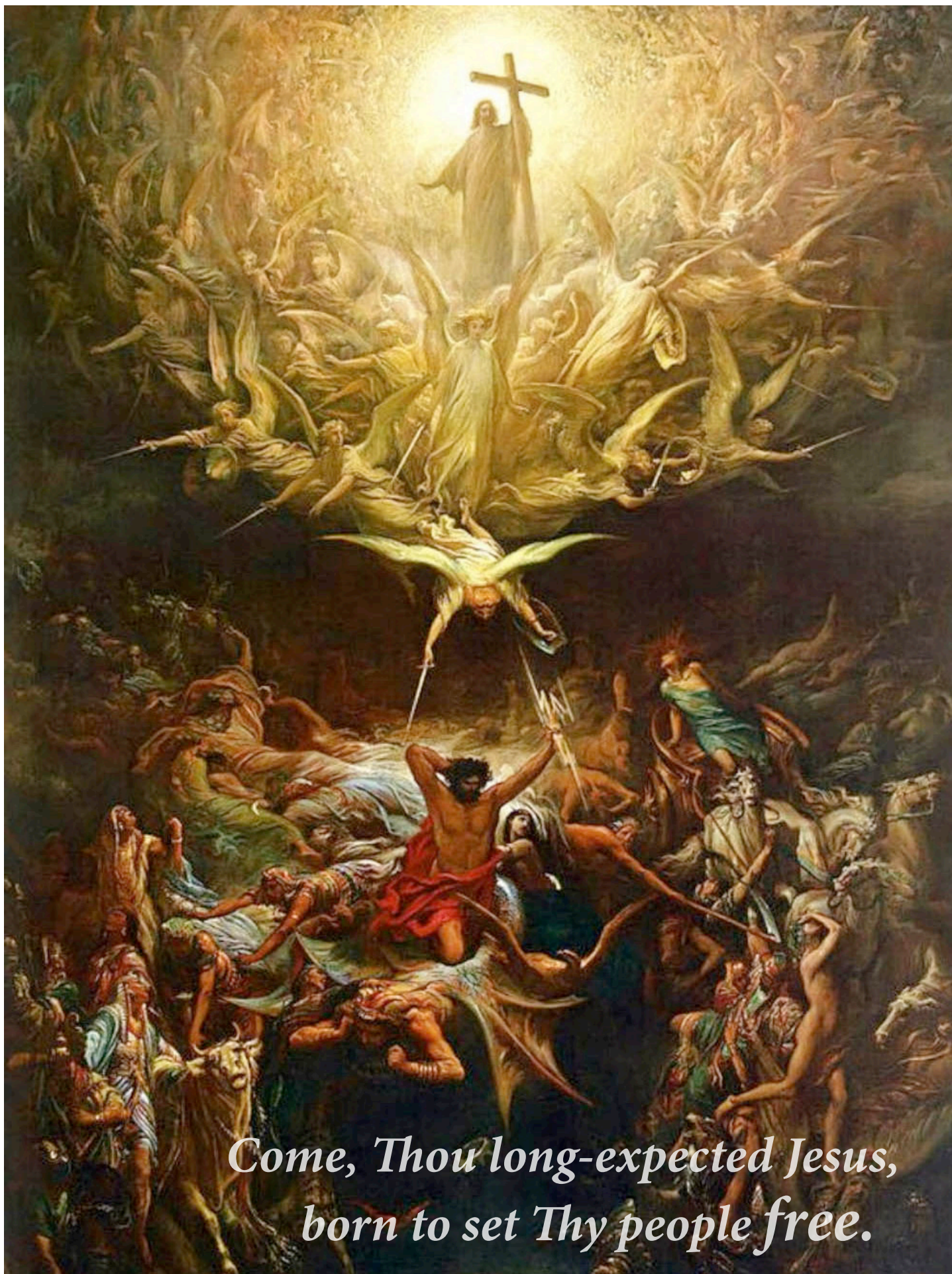
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written by

Dr. Clay Brown
MDPC Equipping Pastor



*Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set Thy people free.*

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 1-7

The Second Coming

LUKE 21:25-36

“Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free.”

(From *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, verse 1)

READ: Luke 21:25-36 (ESV)

And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

And He told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”



Luke 21:28 (ESV)

“Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

For those unfamiliar with the season of Advent, Luke 21:25-36 comes as quite a shock. We want Christmas carols, presents under the decorated tree, the cute baby Jesus, and fruitcake. (No, no one really wants fruitcake!) We think Advent is simply early Christmas.

But Advent means “coming.” Instead of Christmas scenes, we get the Apocalypse, with powers shaken, nations distressed, people fainting, and lessons gained from watching tree leaves. Most of all, we get Jesus returning “with power and great glory” (Luke 21:27, ESV).

What’s up with all this? According to Luke 21:28, when it looks like the end is near, it’s more correct to say our redemption draws near. The Second Advent of Jesus is near, when He will bring His promises to fruition, usher in His justice and grace, create a new heaven and earth, and welcome us into His unadulterated presence.

So what is our redemption? It’s a fascinating term. In antiquity, the redemption of a slave meant you purchased a slave and then freed him/her. Thus our redemption by Jesus means He frees us from sin. All its power and effects vanish. We’re free forevermore.

Our role in this drama? To watch and be ready. For Jesus’ Second Coming will catch many (most?) unaware, embedded in this life’s cares and follies. Then the trap snaps shut. But if you’re staying awake—following Jesus, not the world—your redemption is coming. Freedom is at hand.

Are you ready?



*From our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in Thee.*

Andrea del Sarto, "Saint John the Baptist," about 1517. Worcester Art Museum.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 8-14

John the Baptist

LUKE 3:1-6

“From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.”

(From *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, verse 1)

READ: Luke 3:1-9

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall become straight,

and the rough places shall become level ways,

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”



Luke 3:7-8a, ESV

“He said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.’”

John the Baptist doesn't get invited to many Christmas parties. He never attends “how to make friends and influence people” seminars. Instead, John is a full-fledged prophet, proclaiming raw, unvarnished truth and caring little about who's offended, as in Luke 3:7.

Yet later in Luke's Gospel, we're told John “preached good news to the people” (Luke 3:15, ESV). What? Where is the good news in anything John says? But wait a minute. Before you can receive the good news, you first must recognize the bad news.

The bad news John conveys is we humans are fallen creatures. Even our best efforts fail. To use the Biblical terminology, we are sinners. Calling his listeners a “brood of vipers” and referencing God's wrath is an ar-

resting, but effective, strategy John applies to bring this reality to light.

The good news is in that word “repentance.” It means to turn around and go the opposite direction. We humans naturally walk in the way of death, not life. We need to turn around now and to show our repentance is real by virtue of our changed lives.

How does this happen? Not by being better people, but by following Jesus, the Messiah. He transforms us, makes us new, and gives us the desire to obey Him. You see, Jesus is more than a babe in the manger. He is Lord of all, and the Savior of all who trust in Him.

Who do you trust with your life?



*Born Thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King.*

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 15-21

The Magnificat

LUKE 1:46-55

“Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King.”

(From *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, verse 2)

READ: Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for He who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is His name.

And His mercy is for those who fear Him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

He has brought down the mighty from their thrones

and exalted those of humble estate;

He has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich He has sent away empty.

He has helped His servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

as He spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

Read Luke 1:51-53 (ESV)

He has shown strength with His arm;

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich

He has sent away empty.



Mary bursts forth with this praise and prophecy shortly after visiting her relative Elizabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist, in the Judean hill country. It's important to note Mary sounds nothing like a young teenager girl from the Galilean boondocks here. The Holy Spirit grants her incredible insight far beyond her age and stage.

An impressive aspect of Mary's insight is her use of what some call "the prophetic past tense." Everything in verses 51-53 reads like it has already happened. So convinced of God's action, the prophet speaks as though it has already occurred. No failure of nerve here.

More impressive is what Mary claims God will do and is already in the process of doing. Mary is revolutionary! For good reason, it appears, some authoritarian

governments have banned the reading or singing of these verses.

What Mary announces is nothing short of Jesus' power to radically change the world. Old systems, old regimes, old prejudices—be on guard! The Jesus to be born of Mary is God's means of putting everything right, the way it was meant to be.

Once again, Jesus as merely a cute little baby who coos at everyone is disabused. The King's Advent will deliver people from the powers that be.

If you're part of the oppressors, look out! If you're part of the oppressed, look up! Chances are, you've belonged to both teams at one time or another.

What revolution will you support?



*Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art.*

The Adoration of the Magi, Matthias Stom (fl. 1615–1649)

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 22-28

The Nativity

LUKE 2:1-14

“Israel’s Strength and Consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art.”

(From *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, verse 1)

READ: Luke 2:1-14 (ESV)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

*“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”*



Luke 2:8-9 (ESV)

“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.”

The least likely recipients of an angelic visitation? A group of Judean shepherds.

Shepherds have fallen far since their glory days celebrated by the shepherd king David in Psalm 23. By the time of Jesus’ birth, shepherds belong on the fringes. Their vocation keeps them from observing the ceremonial laws. Their habit of taking what doesn’t belong to them keeps them outside of most towns. Their reputation for lying keeps them from testifying in court.

So why does the angel announce good news to these shepherds? Of all the people possible to be the initial evangelists of the First Advent, why them?

The only way this makes sense is to remember that throughout Luke’s Gospel, God continually moves outsiders from back stage to center stage. Women. Tax collectors. A centurion. Fishermen. Zealots. Peasants. And in our passage, shepherds.

Luke is not alone in recounting God’s tendency to do the unexpected. A cursory reading of the Old Testament notes God’s preference for the unforeseen candidate, like Jacob, Rahab, and David. In the New Testament, reviewing Jesus’ choices for the Twelve and for the important “apostle to the Gentiles” position accomplishes the same result.

Now consider: are we so different today? Aren’t we also outsiders God calls to be part of His unlikely redemptive plan? Our failures, character issues, compulsions, and personality flaws would appear to exclude us from consideration.

But there you go. God is at it again.

Have you thanked God for choosing and welcoming outsiders? Like you?



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