

First Sunday of Advent  
Proper C RCL  
Revised

**Jeremiah 33:14-16**

Jeremiah 33:14-26 is missing from the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures we call the Septuagint (LXX); and this fact, among others, has led some to conclude that there were two Hebrew texts of Jeremiah in antiquity. The LXX translated the shorter text that lacked our passage and was 14% shorter than the current Hebrew text (Masoretic Text or MT). There is also reason to believe the short text is older than the MT since the additional materials in the MT have the appearance of additions to the older text. This theory helps us understand the prose in our passage. The promise of the righteous sprout in vs. 15 as the messianic successor to David reads like prophecy from a prophet in Exile, when there was no messianic king. Further, the reference to the “sprout of David” in verse 15 points back to the words in Jeremiah 23:5-8, words that are in the LXX. Hope for the return of the divine monarchy was not only a religious longing, but also a political expectation during the Babylonian Exile: God would revive the Hebrew nation.

**Psalms 25:1-9**

*Laments* ask for God’s help in time of trouble. They may admit wrongdoing as the reason for the psalmist’s trouble or insist upon the psalmist’s innocence. Either way, the argument of a lament is more or less the same. In Psalm 25, the psalmist admits having committed sin but argues that God should forgive that sin out of compassion (vss. 5-6, 15), faithfulness to the covenant (vs. 9) and for the sake of God’s public reputation (“name,” vs. 10). The psalm from verse 1 through vs. 20 is an *acrostic*, each verse beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Our BCP Psalter combines the first two poetic verses into its verse 1 with the result that one who reads this psalm in another English Bible will find that the *BCP* runs one verse behind.

**1 Thessalonians 3:9-13**

Thessalonica (modern Thessaloniki) was by Paul’s time the capital of Macedonia, a city in which Paul established a major Christian community early in his travels. The occasion for this letter was the death of certain members of the Thessalonian community and the resulting loss of faith in what the Thessalonian Christians understood to be the promise of the Gospel that believers would be spared death until the coming of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Far from chastising his readers for their faith struggle, Paul wrote to express comfort, support and love for the Thessalonian Christians and his longing to be with them soon again.

**Luke 21:25-36**

This passage is a rewriting of Mark 13:24-32 (as is Matthew 24:29-36) and retains the same three elements as Mark, in the same order: (1) the arrival of the Son of Man (vss. 25-28), (2) the Parable of the Fig Tree (vss. 29-33) and (3) advice to be watchful (vss. 34-36). Part 1 articulates the Christian hope for the coming Day of the Lord as a time of victory for believers despite the awfulness of the end-time destruction for the world in general. Luke goes beyond Mark 13:24-27 by emphasizing the joy Christians should express at the coming tribulations because they know their salvation is at hand (vs. 28). The reference to the Son of Man in verse 27 is a direct reference to the vision of the heavenly Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14. Part 2 suggests that there is already evidence that the Day is coming for those who are equipped to see such evidence, and Part 3 counsels constant watchfulness, using drunkenness as a metaphor for its opposite.