

Sunday 12/22/24 – Panama Methodist Church

Sermon Title: “The Journey to Bethlehem: Sermon Series: (Part 4 of 5)

(Slides 1-20 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)

Brothers and sisters, welcome to this our fourth and last Sunday of Advent. On this Sunday, we lit the candle of Love, because on that first Christmas, Love itself came to us. This love was God in the flesh and was named Jesus. Jesus teaches us to love, and our love for each other is great because of Jesus. In fact, we have lit the Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and of course this morning, Love. Jesus came to bring us all of these things. This Tuesday night though, on Christmas Eve we will be celebrating the memory of Jesus’ birth that first Christmas morning in Bethlehem. It must have been such a joy-filled occasion, as we are still telling this story every year for over two-thousand years . For all of these reasons, the sermon series that I am preaching through Christmas Eve is called, “The Journey to Bethlehem” sermon series. In this sermon series we are symbolically journeying to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus, and we are talking about what it all means along the way. Here is our cover slide for this sermon series, once again:

Slide 1 – (“The Journey to Bethlehem” Sermon Series – Cover Picture)



While I did a sermon in this sermon series about Old Testament prophecies or predictions about Jesus, this morning's message is one of those prophecies. Yet it is so powerful, I thought that a sermon on this prophecy from the Book of Isaiah, or the Prophet Isaiah 11:1-16 would really get us even more ready for Christmas. Given this, my sermon title for this morning is called:

Slide 2 – (“The Journey to Bethlehem” Sermon Series – Part 4)



The scripture we are going to look at here in a couple of minutes from Isaiah 11:1-16 really drives home who Jesus is, will be, and will continue to be. Further Isaiah

11:1-16 explains beautifully why there is great cause for hope on the birth of Christ, and Christ in general.

In looking briefly at what we have discussed in the first three weeks of this sermon series, let us take a look together:

Slide 3 – (“Advent/Prophecies/Preparing the Way”)

Advent/Prophecies/Preparing the Way:

- Advent is a 40-Day season of spiritual preparation for Jesus's birth and Second Coming.
- Hundreds of scriptures in the Old Testament prophesied or predicted Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, and Second Coming.

In looking just, a little bit more of review of where we have been in this sermon series, let us look at one more slide:

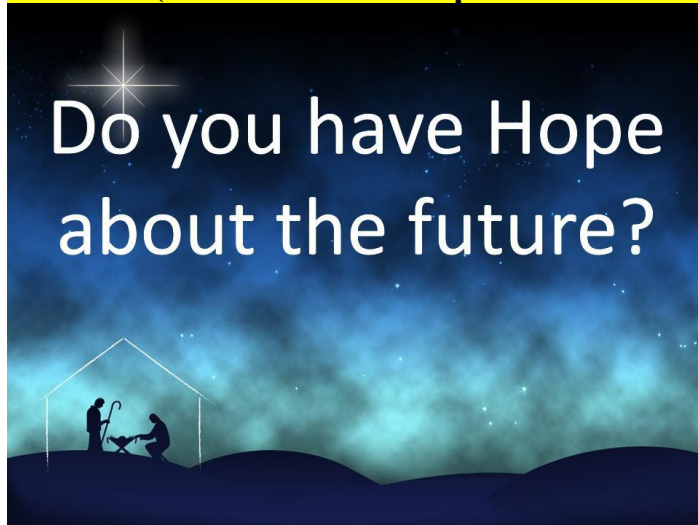
Slide 4 – (“Advent/Prophecies/Preparing the Way”)

Advent/Prophecies/Preparing the Way:

- As prophesied or predicted in Isaiah 40:3, Jesus' cousin John the Baptist was called to prepare the way for Jesus to start his three year public ministry on earth.
- How are we preparing the way for Jesus?

If Jesus Christ, our Lord, and Savior came to earth on Christmas, as a baby, to in part, bring us hope, do we have hope in this season of Advent and soon to be Christmas? Do we hope in general? Hope in the future, and hope all around?

Slide 5 – (“Do You Have Hope About the Future?”)



Depending on who you and I talk to, the person might have great hope about the future, or little to no hope. Or may we have hope in some areas, but not others.

Jesus Christ came that first Christmas to give us Hope, and on this Fourth Sunday of Advent, this is why this message is called, “Hope Is Coming Among Us Soon!”

However, we feel about the future, may we feel great about our future with Jesus Christ. For Jesus will never leave us or forsake us, and our future in him is secure.

This should give us all great hope in our future with Christ.

Let us hear of the hope that Prophet Isaiah predicted about Jesus Christ almost seven-hundred years before his birth. I would invite with your Bibles or

Bible Apps, to turn the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament, chapter 11:1-16. Let us read this together:

Slide 6 – (“Isaiah 11:1-2”)

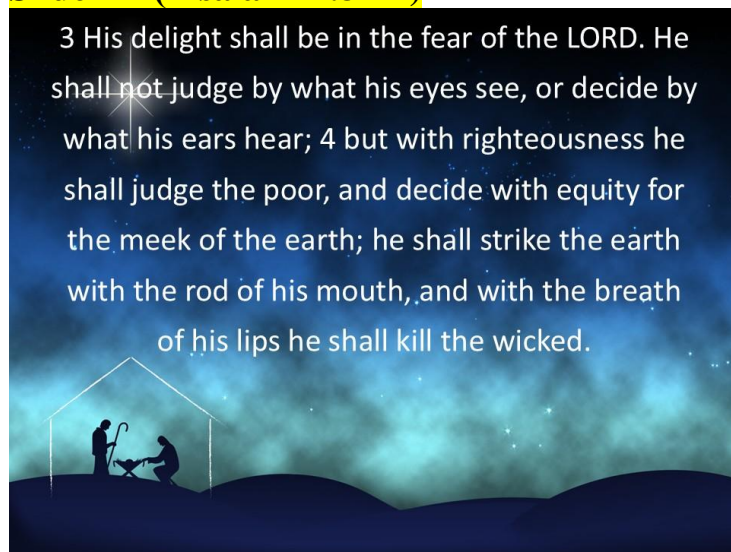


Since Jesus is a descendant of the great King David, and since he was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, this scripture from Isaiah 11:1-16 is very important. You see, the father of the great King David, was a man named Jesse. Isaiah is telling us that “shoot” or a branch will come out the stump of Jesse. This means that a descendant of King David, King David’s father Jesse, and going all the way back to Abraham, is coming. This person is not just another human king that will be born on Christmas. Isaiah tells us that the Holy Spirit of the LORD or God will rest of this person, who is Jesus. When Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon like a fiery dove. This “shoot” or branch from “the stump of Jesse” will have the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, and the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. This

savior, Jesus Christ, which is coming amongst us soon will have every gift, grace, power, and authority. This is making Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone the only qualified to be an all-sufficient savior and make him and him alone the only one qualified to die for the sins of the world.

Isaiah continues in 11:3-4, telling us:

Slide 7 – (“Isaiah 11:3-4”)

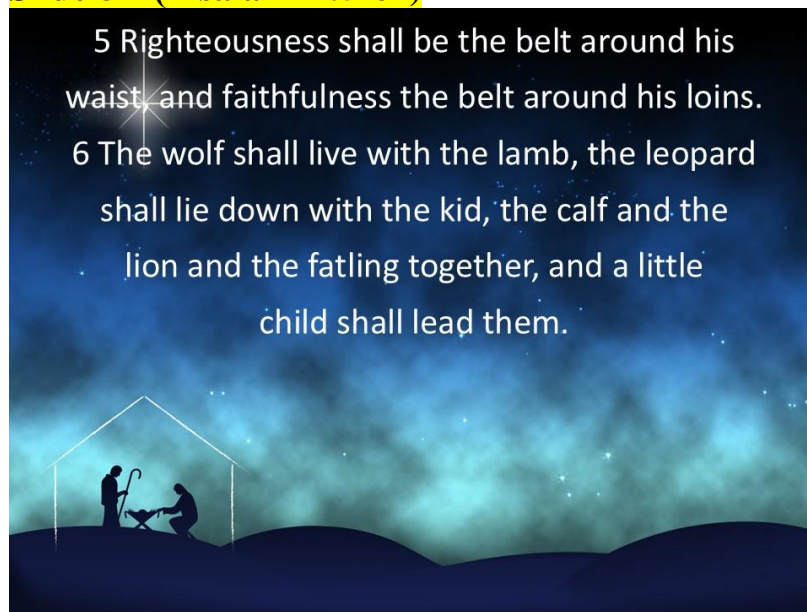


This “shoot” or branch of “the stump of Jesse,” King David’s father, will delight in the fear or respect of the LORD. This savior, this Jesus Christ will judge not just by his eyes and his ears but with righteousness. Isaiah says that this King of Kings will judge the poor with righteousness, and will be good and fair to the meek, the lowly, etc. This savior, this Jesus Christ, will strike the earth “with the rod of his mouth,” and with his is own breath his lips will kill the wicked. This savior coming to us on Christmas will in end award righteousness, faith, love, hope, peace, joy,

mercy, and kindness. This same savior will one day destroy all evil and unrighteousness.

The Prophet Isaiah continues in 11:5-6 telling us what it will be like when this “shoot” or branch from “the stump of Jesus” returns to us one day. This is what it says, once again:

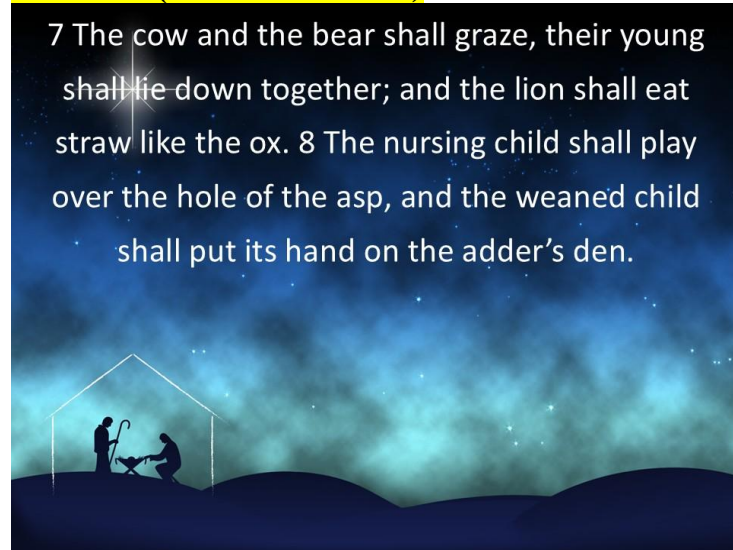
Slide 8 – (“Isaiah 11:5-6”)



This savior, this Jesus Christ, who is coming among soon as a baby in Bethlehem, will wear righteousness like a belt around his waist, and faithful like a belt around his loins. Not only this, but everything that is violent, destructive, and evil will be gone. So much so, the Prophet Isaiah tells us in 11:6 that when Jesus comes again, “the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid”. Further, Isaiah said that “the calf and the lion and fatling together.” On top of all of this,

Isaiah said that “a little child shall lead them.” These animals that presently predator and prey, will be friends, and “a little child shall lead them.”

Slide 9 – (“Isaiah 11:7-8”)



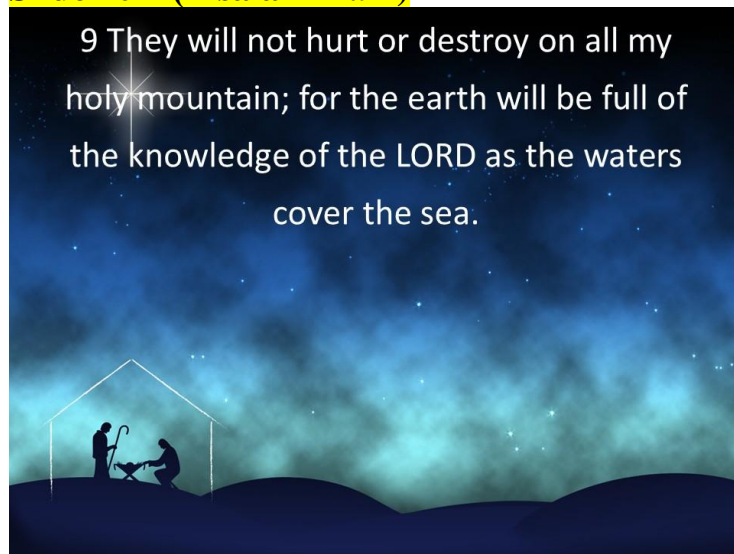
Even beyond everything that we just dove into in Isaiah 11:5-6, with a little child leading them, in Isaiah 11:7-8, we hear that the cow and bear and will graze and get along together. Further the cow and bear's young or babies will lie and be together. We then read that the lion will eat straw like the ox. No more predators and prey, as all animals and life on earth will get along and be friends. This is quite a perfect world that Jesus will usher in when he returns to earth one day. It does not stop here though, the Prophet Isaiah says in 11:8 that nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp. An Asp is name of venomous snakes that lived in the area where the Prophet Isaiah and eventually Jesus would live. If an Asp bit a nursing child, or perhaps anyone it could be fatal. Yet, when Jesus returns all creation will be at peace. Lastly, in Isaiah 11:8, we read that not a nursing child but

weaned or formerly nursing child “will put its hand on the adder’s den”. You might be asking, “Pastor Paul, what is an Adder’s Den?” Here is an answer that I found:

In the Bible, the phrase "adder's den" appears in Isaiah 11:8, which describes a future king of Israel who will rule over the earth and ensure that animals live together in peace (Isa. 11:8, NRSV).

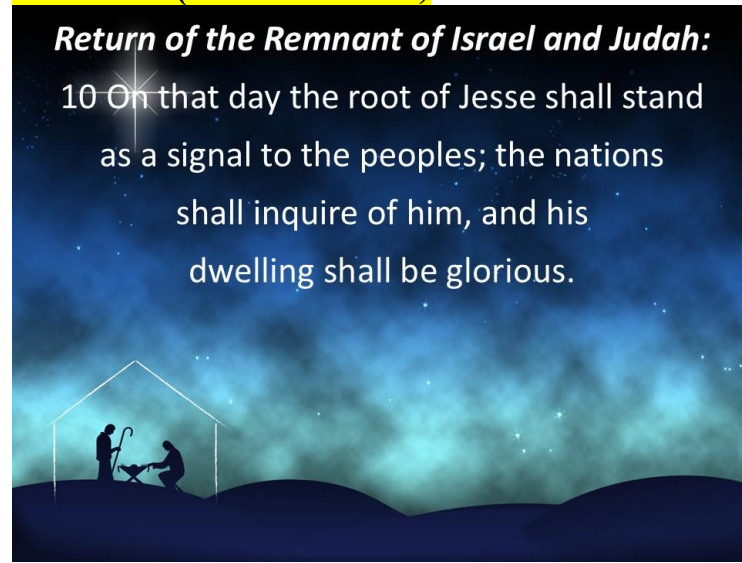
When Jesus Christ our Lord returns one day, not only will all of humanity live in peace, all creatures and all creation will leave at people. Can you imagine a world such as this? This is why Jesus coming to us soon on Christmas in Bethlehem, and his return are so important. Hopefully by now you can understand why I wanted to preach on Isaiah 11:1-16 during this season of Advent.

Slide 10 – (“Isaiah 11:9”)



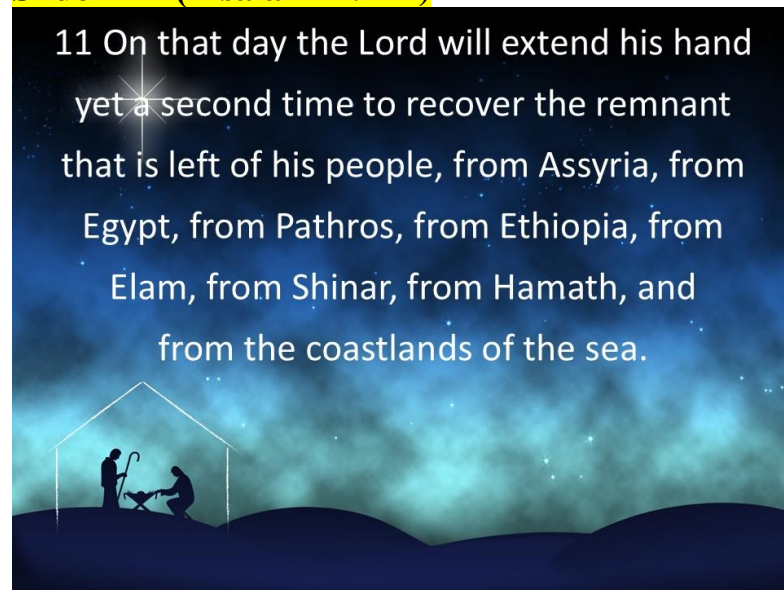
In Isaiah 11:9 we hear that when Christ comes back to earth to reign that there will be no more hurt of destruction, and the “earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the water cover the sea.” Knowledge and understanding of Jesus will grow, and the world will be at peace.

Slide 11 – (“Isaiah 11:10”)



In Isaiah 11:10, on this day that Jesus Christ our Lord returns, the root of Jesses, Jesus, will stand “as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.” Friends, brothers and sisters, this is who is coming soon to be born in Bethlehem on Christmas. This Jesus will die for sins, rise from the dead, and one day will come back to establish his kingdom here on earth. In fact, in Isaiah 11:11 is speaks more of this day when Jesus Christ returns to earth. The Prophet Isaiah says when Jesus returns, he will extend his hand a second time to recover the “remnant” that is left of his people from various places.

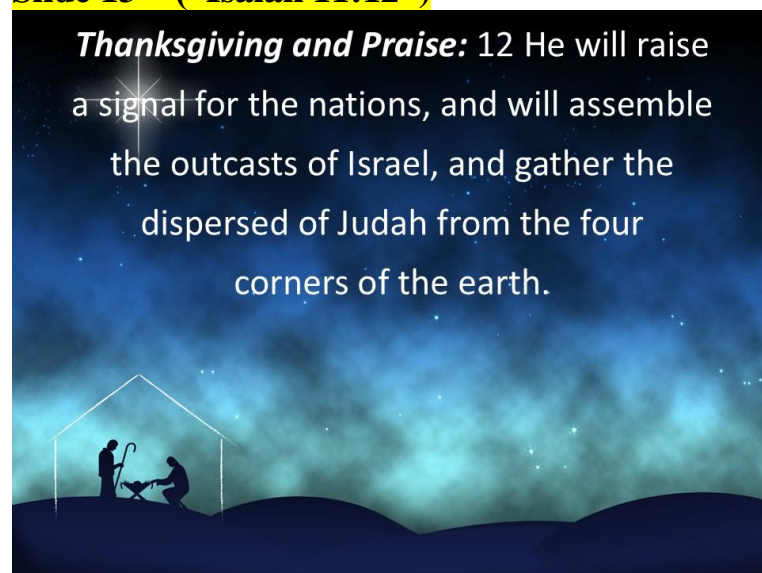
Slide 12 – (“Isaiah 11:11”)



11 On that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that is left of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

In this scene of Christ’s return, God will gather the Jewish people of the world to Israel. At this point, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, will restore peace and justice, and reign on Earth for a thousand years.

Slide 13 – (“Isaiah 11:12”)

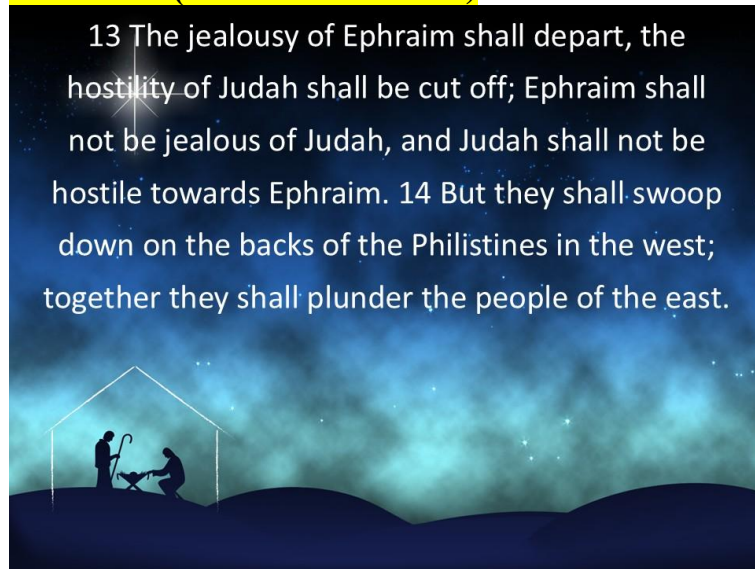


Thanksgiving and Praise: 12 He will raise a signal for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

In continuing in Isaiah 11:12, the Prophet Isaiah tells us that Jesus will “raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the outcasts of Israel.” Christ will “gather

the dispersed from Judah from the four corners of the earth.” Jesus will reign for a thousand years and will destroy all evil and unrighteousness. All those who rejected him will be judged, and the righteous will be rewarded.

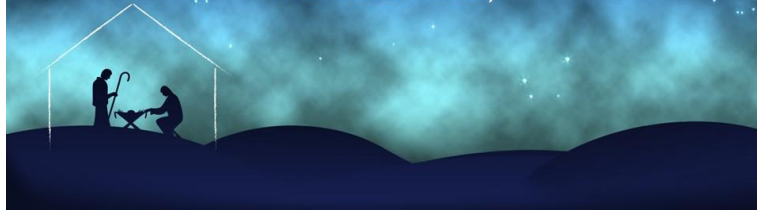
Slide 14 – (“Isaiah 11:13-14”)



The Prophet Isaiah, then tells us in Isaiah 11:13-14, that jealousy and hostility will end. Ephraim and Judah will be friends, God’s people will unite, and all people will be under the righteous rule of Christ. The Prophet Isaiah continues in Isaiah 11:14b-15, telling us that people will come under the leadership and rule of Christ. The wicked and evil will be destroyed, and all people will live under the righteous reign of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Slide 15 – (“Isaiah 11:14-15”)

They shall put forth their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them.
15 And the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt; and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching wind; and will split it into seven channels, and make a way to cross on foot;



Imagine the reign of Christ, when all that will exist will be mercy, holiness, righteousness, grace, love, and unity in Jesus. This my friends, brothers and sisters is the savior that coming to us soon in Bethlehem, and one day returning in glory to usher in his kingdom on earth.

Slide 16 – (“Isaiah 11:16”)

16 so there shall be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt.



Finally, the prophet Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 11:16, the righteous will be gathered in, the holy will be brought to Christ and live with him forever. This, once again my friends, is the Jesus who is coming among us soon, and who will return one day in glory. The remnant of the twelve tribes of Israel all with all righteous will be with him forever.

This is why, my sermon title is called, “Home is coming among us soon!” Hope is coming to Bethlehem with Jesus is born on that first Christmas, and hope is coming when Jesus returns to live and reign.

Slide 17 – (“Hope Will Come - Isaiah 11:16”)



I also found a good painting depiction of these scene when Christ returns of all the animals of the earth becoming friends and being led by a little child. We can see the power of this imagery in this painting:

Slide 18 – (“A Little Child Will Lead Them - Isaiah 11:16”)



As I call our Praise Team forward, on this fourth Sunday of Advent, how does all of this apply to our lives? Here is how:

Slide 19 – (“Application to Our Lives”)

Application to Our Lives:

- Wherever we are in our lives, we have great cause for Hope, because we have Jesus.
- God is in our lives, through ups and downs. Keep going, keep praying, keep having Hope!
- Jesus came and is coming again to give us all Hope!

A silhouette of a shepherd with a staff and sheep, standing on a hill against a night sky with a star.

My friends, brothers and sisters, Jesus is coming soon. Coming to Bethlehem on Christmas, into our hearts daily, and one day return and reign on earth.

Slide 20 – (“Closing Slide”)



Here is the closing slide, as we continue to move through Advent and soon to be Christmas. God bless and have a have a happy Fourth Sunday of Advent!