

Advent 1 A

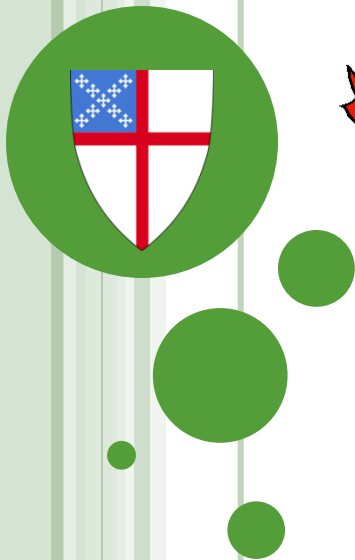
November 27, 2022

Isaac Watts
1st Century AD



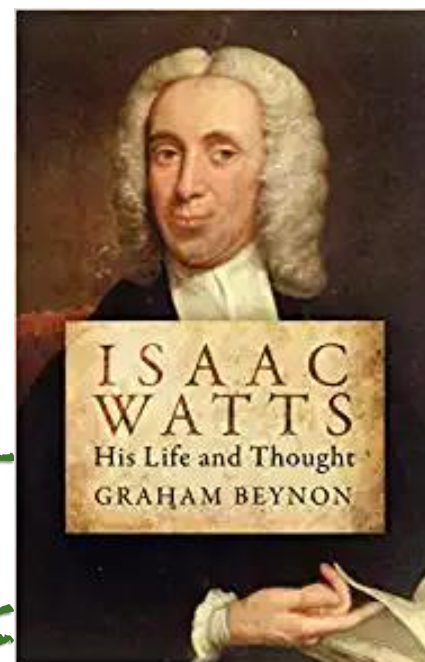
Isaiah 2:1-5
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

Theologian, Hymnist,
and Logician



Isaac Watts (17 Jul 1674 – 25 Nov 1748) is recognized as the "Father of English Hymnody," since he was England's first prolific and popular hymnwriter, credited with over 750 hymns. Many of his hymns remain in active use today and have been translated into many languages (eight of which are listed in the side notes to this page). Unable to go to either Oxford or Cambridge due to his Non-conformity, Watts went to the Dissenting Academy at Stoke Newington in 1690, and much of his life centered around that village, then a rural idyll but now part of Inner London. He held religious opinions that were more non-denominational or ecumenical than was at that time common for a non-conformist, having a greater interest in promoting education and scholarship, than preaching for any particular ministry. Sacred music scholar Stephen Marini describes the ways in which Watts contributed to English hymnody. Most notably, he led the way including in worship "original songs of Christian experience;" i.e., new poetry. The older tradition limited itself to the poetry of *The Bible*, notably the Psalms. This stemmed from the teachings of 16th century Reformation leader John Calvin, who initiated the practice of creating verse translations of the Psalms in the vernacular for congregational singing. Watts' introduction of extra-Biblical poetry influenced a new era of Protestant hymnody as other poets followed in his path. Watts also introduced a new way of rendering the Psalms in verse for church services. Watts proposed that the metrical translations of the Psalms as sung by Protestant Christians should give them a specifically Christian perspective. Besides being a famous hymnwriter, Isaac Watts was also a renowned theologian and logician, writing many books and essays on these subjects. He authored a textbook on logic which was particularly popular, despite its rather long title: *Logic, or The Right Use of Reason in the Enquiry After Truth With a Variety of Rules to Guard Against Error in the Affairs of Religion and Human Life, as well as in the Sciences*. This was first published in 1724, and its popularity ensured that it went through 20 editions.

Isaac Watts



Watts' best-known hymns:

Joy to the world!

Come ye that love the Lord
Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove
Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
When I survey the wondrous cross
Alas! and did my Saviour bleed
This is the day the Lord has made



Collect for Advent 1A

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Prayer for Advent 1A [Isaac Watts]

God of truth and grace, you gave Isaac Watts singular gifts to present your praise in verse, that he might write psalms, hymns and spiritual songs for your Church: Give us grace joyfully to sing your praises now and in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'



For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

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Better Times Ahead

--V1: Reiterates a promise Jerusalem will become the holy city for many nations (Vv2-4).

-- "In latter days," points to the future, but offers no clue as to how far in the future this might be. What is clear is that it will be, by the grace of Yahweh, a glorious future.

--V2: In cultures of that day, mountains were where people encountered God.

--YHWH's house established as the highest of mountains symbolizes the preeminent status YHWH will enjoy "in days to come."

--One of many scripture references that God loves Gentiles as well as Jews.

--We find the fulfillment of the prophecy in Christ, who broke down dividing walls between Jews & Gentiles

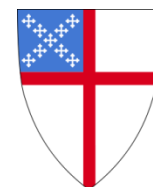
--V3: Choosing God involves accepting certain restrictions—a life-giving choice

--V4: Those relying on YHWH to resolve their conflicts will enjoy a peace dividend.

--They'll no longer need swords/spears; they will thus transform death's tools into instruments of life (plowshares and knives used for pruning vines).

--V5: The prophet calls the house of Jacob to "walk in the light of the Lord"

ADVENT 1A: SWORDS TO PLOUGHSHARES [ISAIAH 2:1-5]



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You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light;



WAKEUP

let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

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Love Fulfills the Law

--V11: The dawning of a new age will follow Christ's resurrection.

--Paul does not speak of salvation as present, but says it is "now nearer," Salvation is both present and future.

--V12: Night is the time for sleep, but "the night is far gone" Paul wants us to be awake & alert to greet a new dawn.

--Paul cautions us to behave morally, honestly, decently--such behavior is appropriate to who we are—to whose we are: children of light

--Paul lists 3 pairs of sins associated with darkness we must be especially careful to put off:

- V13c: reveling and drunkenness
- V13d: sexual promiscuity / lustful acts
- V13e: strife and jealousy.

--V14: When we make Christ Lord over our lives, temptation loses much of its power.

--When we look to Christ for guidance in major decisions, he helps us to avoid dead ends and blind alleys.

--Honoring Christ in our interactions helps us avoid hurting others and destroying ourselves.

--Temptation continues, but we can face it in the confidence that Christ will help us overcome it.

ADVENT 1A: TIMEKEEPING! [ROMANS 13:11-14]



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Jesus said to the disciples, "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man.



of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

**BE
READY
MATTHEW 24:36-44**

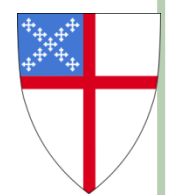
Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

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ADVENT 1A: ONLY GOD KNOWS [MATTHEW 24:36-44]

The Day/Time Doesn't Matter

- Signs can warn those who understand danger is imminent even if they don't know when that danger will manifest
- Don't lose sight of the primary thrust that the Father alone knows the day and time of the coming of the Son of Man.
- As carefully as we read signs, they will not allow us to predict the day and time with any accuracy.
- V44: Son of Man will come at an unexpected hour; God will confound all efforts to predict the day and time.
- The good news: if we live in faith, we needn't know the day and time. We will be ready!
- Vv41-42: at the 2nd Coming, faithful folk will be immediately taken up to a heavenly reward & the unfaithful ones will be left behind to a hellish fate.
- the points that Jesus teaches here:
 - Christ will come again.
 - His coming will be swift & surprising.
 - We'll split into 2 groups (those who are taken/those left behind).
 - So we'd better be ready.
- The point—we had better be ready. If we focus on readiness, we need not worry about the details. We can trust Jesus to get the details right.
- Prepare for The 2nd Coming by...
 - (1) loving & serving God
 - (2) loving & serving our neighbor.



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