

Are we living in the end times? Is Christ getting ready to return? These are questions that pop up from time to time because of what is happening in the world. ISIS has the world in fear. Turkey shot down a Russian plane. Threats of terrorist attacks here in the US. The tension between countries seems to be pretty high right now as we fight and disagree on just about everything. These are the signs that deal with countries.

There are signs that pertain to the environment. Just a couple of weeks ago, there were tornados in western Kansas on one day and a blizzard the next. We have had more earthquakes even feeling one here in Salina. There are major droughts and major flooding throughout the world.

As we watch or read the news, there are stories after stories of hate and violence everywhere. It is almost mind boggling as we try to figure out or understand what the heck is going on. So far, Christ has not returned, but that day gets closer with each second that goes by.

It is easy to see where the questions come from concerning Christ's return. But you know, we have been living in the end times since Jesus ascended to heaven. Is Christ getting ready to return has been asked for the last 2000 years.

And throughout all those years, we could only say yes. Yes, Christ is getting ready to return but we have no idea of when that will be. So until that time when Christ does return, we are warned to be on guard so that we are not caught by surprise. This is actually what Advent is all about.

With the busyness of this time of year, Advent can get lost in the shuffle. For instance, people are already jumping to Christmas. This is the first Sunday of Advent and we are ready to celebrate Christmas.

Don't get me wrong, I love the season of Christmas, but we also need Advent. Advent helps us to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. And so we usually think of that in two ways: 1. the second coming of Christ and 2. the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

We focus on the 2nd Coming first and then as we get closer to Christmas, we shift our focus to the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

As we patiently wait for Christ to return, Jesus tells us to do three things. First we are to be on guard so that we are not lost in corruption or drunkenness or the worries of this life to a point where we are caught unexpectedly when Christ does come.

Second, we are to be alert at all times. We know that we are living in the end times. We know that Christ will be coming for the second time to judge the living and the dead. And if we are not alert, then we will be caught off guard.

And third, we are to pray that we will have the strength to stand before Christ. We know that as the coming of Christ gets closer, there will be more turmoil here on earth and it is God who will be able to help us to remain faithful and to stand firm in our relationship with God.

During this season of Advent, prepare yourself for the coming of Christ. Ask God to help you to remain on guard so that Christ's coming will not catch you unprepared. Ask HIS strength so that you will not take the easy way out and turn your back on God.

Advent is all about preparation. Preparing yourself for the coming of Christ. It is very easy to get distracted in everything that happens at this time of year, which is why we need to ask for God's help in being on guard and prepared.