Name: _____

DEEP-DIVE LESSON

# Will God Come? Four Readings, Three Comings, One Hope

| | |
|---|---|
| TODAY'S BIG IDEA | God answered Isaiah's prayer to "tear the heavens" in Jesus' birth, answers it now in Word and Sacrament, and will answer it fully when Christ returns. |
| BIBLE READINGS | Isaiah 64:1–9 · Psalm 80 · 1 Corinthians 1:3–9 · Mark 13:24–37 · also Mark 1:10 and 15:38 |
| BEFORE CLASS | Read "How the readings tie together" on our site. |

## 1 The lament tradition

Is it faithful to complain to God? Why or why not?

## 2 Isaiah 64: Prayer from the ruins

**Isaiah 64:1** Oh that you would tear the heavens, that you would come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence.

**Isaiah 64:6** For we have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteousness is like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Isaiah 64:8–9 But now, LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay and you our potter. We all are the work of your hand. Don’t be furious, LORD. Don’t remember iniquity forever. Look and see, we beg you, we are all your people.

1. **Isaiah 56–66 looks back on the return from Babylon to a ruined Jerusalem. Why might a people back home still pray “come down”?**

2. **Verse 6 is a classic text for the Reformation teaching that our righteousness cannot save us. Does the context support that use?**

3. **Mark’s Gospel uses the same verb, “tear,” twice: the heavens are torn at Jesus’ baptism (Mark 1:10) and the Temple curtain is torn at his death (15:38). What is Mark saying?**

## 3 Psalm 80: The shining face

Psalm 80:3 Turn us again, God. Cause your face to shine, and we will be saved.

1. **The refrain grows each time: “God,” “God of Armies,” “LORD God of Armies.” What does that build toward?**

2. **Verse 17 prays for “the son of man whom you made strong.” Originally that likely meant Israel or its king. How did the church come to hear it?**

## 4 Mark 13: Watch

Mark 13:26–27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. Then he will send out his angels, and will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky.

Mark 13:32–33 But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Watch, keep alert, and pray; for you don’t know when the time is.

1. **How do you handle verse 30, “this generation will not pass away”?**

2. **The Church Fathers often read “nor the Son” as referring to Christ’s human nature. Is that a dodge or a real insight?**

3. **Lutherans and Reformed differ on how Christ is present in the Supper but agree on his bodily return. How might each tradition answer: “How does Christ come to us now?”**

## 5 Grace and the goal

1. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:8 (“blameless in the day of our Lord”) next to Isaiah 64:6 (“all our righteousness is like a polluted garment”). How does the second become the first?**

2. **Where do Christians today treat grace as permission rather than power?**

## 6 Pray and send

One area where I have been spiritually asleep:

One person I will serve this week:

Refrain: **“Turn us again, LORD God of Armies. Cause your face to shine, and we will be saved.”**
Close: “Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.”

Scripture: World English Bible (public domain). Free to print and copy.