

**Worship Material**  
**Hopeful beginnings**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Father God,  
as we begin this season of Advent,  
a season of watching and waiting,  
fill us with your hope  
that we might be bearers of hope to others.  
**Amen.**

**Read Luke 21:25-36**

**Bible Notes**

This is the latter part of Jesus' sermon by the Temple before his final meal with his disciples and his arrest. The language and imagery are drawn from the prophets (e.g. Isaiah 13:10, 24:19; Joel 2:10), who speak of the unravelling of the order of creation as God's judgement dawns. Luke suggests that this has already begun in the distress caused by the destruction of Jerusalem (see Luke 21:20ff). Like Mark, Luke hears Jesus speaking into his time and place, here to believers living in a Roman city, in words that have abiding significance (vv.32-33). The 'Son of Man coming in a cloud' (v.27) is mysterious but Jesus sees himself as Daniel's glorious figure, who, despite his rejection by powerful earthly rulers, is honoured by God.

Luke is the only one of the evangelists to write a second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, which narrates the outcome of Jesus' divine vindication – the birth of God's messianic people through the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' parable of the fig tree and its springtime leaves anticipates this. With their hope-filled birthright, Jesus' followers must avoid being dragged down by distractions, like the seed that falls among thorns in Jesus' parable of the sower (v.34; cf Luke 8:7,14). Instead, they are called to be alert and prayerful enough to look beyond themselves (vv.28,36), which is what Jesus expects of his three closest disciples just before his arrest (Luke 22:39-46) and to hold

their nerve in whatever crises they face, as they wait for the day of God's kingdom (v.31).

### **Prayer**

God of all hope and all seasons,  
we praise you for your promise that the darkest night will pass  
and the dawn bring new hope and light;  
the fiercest storm will subside  
and your grace will bring stillness and calm;  
the deepest wounds will heal and your love  
will bring acceptance and courage;  
the season of waiting will end and  
you will meet us wonderfully and joyfully.  
We thank you for everything and everyone  
who draws us closer to you.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer to conclude**

Let us go out in hope to share God's hope with others, that we might bring light into the dark corners of the world.