



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 22, 2024

Weekly theme: Love

SCRIPTURE

REVELATION 21:22-22:5

22 I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 Its gates will never be shut by day - and there will be no night there. 26 People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord

God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

DEVOTION

The Rev. Nathan Carlson '11

The Gospel of John introduces Jesus as “The light [that] shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (John 1:5, NRSVA) In the Apocalypse of John, the apostle sees Jesus, now the crucified, resurrected, and ascended Lamb of God, for who and what He truly is—the Light of the new world. This light illuminates the new creation, revealing its true, full purpose in God’s presence. The uncorrupted, undefiled, eternal nature of all things steps out from the shadows to be revealed as fully part of God’s reigning kingdom.

Trudging through Advent year after year only to arrive at the same manger scene, it becomes increasingly easy for us to lose sight of the immaculate in the mundane and routine. We recite words of power from rote memory. Scenes of God breaking through into humanity get wrapped in tattered cloths. The infinite becomes seasonal and disposable. How are we tempted to dust off previous year’s sermon jackets, provide a touchup, and distribute the same words to the same people? After all, isn’t this message eternal and in need of no refreshing?

And yet, the nature of light itself, of vision, should prohibit this from occurring in our own lives. Light illuminates the present nature of things. Stepping outside after a fresh snowfall changes the contour of one’s own backyard, so that a child’s imagination can see it as a new wonderland of possibilities not present yesterday. So too does the eternal light of God’s Kingdom, come in the Lamb of God, shine forth from eternity always on fresh changes in our own lives and the world around us. The ongoing, transformative work that this God with us has been doing in our own lives since last we approached this season certainly means God’s light falls upon new ground. Until John’s vision of the New Jerusalem becomes real for us in eternity, the question each Advent season should be: what is this light hitting in us this year that has changed? What darkness and decay has this Lamb of God overcome since last we saw His sign?

PRAYER

Lamb of God, shine your light into our lives illuminating the work you have done among us this year. Show us where darkness and decay remain, that we may invite you in again. Let us find ourselves filled with wonder at your work as we approach your day, Emmanuel. Amen.

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