

The Rev. Helen Kester '06  
Pastor, Derry Presbyterian Church

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Morning Psalms 50; 147:1-11

**First Reading Isaiah 31:1-9**

Second Reading Revelation 21:22-22:5

Gospel Luke 1:39-48a (48b-56)

Evening Psalms 53; 17

1 Alas for those who go down to Egypt for help and who rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord! 2 Yet he too is wise and brings disaster; he does not call back his words, but will rise against the house of the evildoers, and against the helpers of those who work iniquity. 3 The Egyptians are human, and not God; their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and the one helped will fall, and they will all perish together. 4 For thus the Lord said to me, As a lion or a young lion growls over its prey, and—when a band of shepherds is called out against it—is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the Lord of hosts will come down to fight upon Mount Zion and upon its hill. 5 Like birds hovering overhead, so the Lord of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will spare and rescue it. 6 Turn back to him whom you have deeply betrayed, O people of Israel. 7 For on that day all of you shall throw away your idols of silver and idols of gold, which your hands have sinfully made for you. 8 “Then the Assyrian shall fall by a sword, not of mortals; and a sword, not of humans, shall devour him; he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be put to forced labor. 9 His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic,” says the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

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Here we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are so much more sophisticated than those uneducated folks in Isaiah's time. We know that statues of gold and silver or wood carvings have no power. We cannot be deceived by people who have big horses and heavy body armor and the most troops to fight. We would never worship a person thinking that they are a god.

We are sure that we have come so far from those ancient Israelites that we convince ourselves that we are not tempted by the same sins that lead to the downfall of their nation. But just listen to the conversations around us. Parents bemoan the fact that they cannot buy the latest electronic devices for their children and that they are letting their child down. I have yet to hear a parent bemoan the fact that they have not taken their child to worship and to learn values that will lead to the real source of being lifted up. We will spend exorbitant amounts of money to see our favorite group or sports team, or gamble, but cry in outrage that the church dared to ask for a pledge or increase in giving that will lead to a discipline in our lives that will bring us true joy. We look at the criminal behavior around us and instead of falling on our knees in prayer we buy a hand gun.

We deceive ourselves, if we truly believe that we have left the sins of Israel behind us. The Good News for us is that Jesus comes to seek and to save as much today as he did 2000 years ago.

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*Prayer: God of might and power, call us back from following after false power and idols to the only true source of strength and protection. Help us to engage in activities and worship that will draw us closer to you. In Jesus Name through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*