

Saturday December 22nd, 2012

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Scripture:

Isaiah 31: 1-9

- 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.

Devotional:

Perhaps the greatest challenge to people of faith is to live courageously, as Jesus did each day, in a world that rejects the compassionate rule of God and replaces it with the competitive standards of a win-lose culture. Advent is the Christian season that emphasizes active waiting. Isaiah the Prophet spoke of the folly of nations relying on military might and fragile alliances to make themselves powerful conquerors over others (Isa 31: 1 – 9).

Generations later, God chose a young girl, not only to bear the messianic Prince of Peace, but to inspire her to sing God's revolutionary message: "The Lord has used his powerful arm to scatter those who are proud. God drags strong rulers from their thrones and puts humble people in place of power. God gives the hungry good things to eat and send the rich away with nothing." (Luke 1: 51 – 53)

God call us to the challenge of active waiting in the midst of a culture of violence, a culture we are called to resist in the power of God.

Prayer:

Compassionate God, awaken us once again from our distracted preoccupation with the culture of glitter, glamor, guns and glory and be reborn in us today. Save and empower us by your love.
Amen.