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Scripture

Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸ as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the LORD.

Devotional

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

And no, it is not because of the snow. It's not because of the Christmas lights or the aisles of ornaments or tubes of brightly decorated wrapping paper. It's not because of bell ringers wrapped in Santa Claus guises or the halls being decked. And it's not because of persons piously carving time to be proper stewards of Advent. It's not because of the songs we sing or the foods we eat or the number of relatives we tolerate.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

Because there is something in the air. It clings to it, hovers with wings of feathers and rests gently on the soul. Threads woven through the spaces we inhabit, as we enter and as we leave. Most days traces of it may be thin, some days it may be harder to see than other days but it is there. It is here.

It is hope. Hope has come and is coming again.

Prayer

Holy God, Sustainer and Creator, grant us the sight to see you in our midst so that we can rejoice aloud with all our hearts as daughter Zion. We have nothing more to fear for our King has come, in whose precious name we lift up this prayer, Amen.