

Advent Devotional December 21, 2018

Scripture

Isaiah 29:9-24

⁹ Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor,
blind yourselves and be blind!

Be drunk, but not from wine;
stagger, but not from strong drink!

¹⁰ For the LORD has poured out upon you
a spirit of deep sleep;
he has closed your eyes, you prophets,
and covered your heads, you seers.

¹¹ The vision of all this has become for you like the words of a sealed document. If it is given to those who can read, with the command, "Read this," they say, "We cannot, for it is sealed." ¹² And if it is given to those who cannot read, saying, "Read this," they say, "We cannot read."

¹³ The Lord said:

Because these people draw near with their mouths
and honor me with their lips,
while their hearts are far from me,
and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote;

¹⁴ so I will again do
amazing things with this people,
shocking and amazing.
The wisdom of their wise shall perish,
and the discernment of the discerning shall be hidden.

¹⁵ Ha! You who hide a plan too deep for the LORD,
whose deeds are in the dark,
and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"

¹⁶ You turn things upside down!
Shall the potter be regarded as the clay?
Shall the thing made say of its maker,
"He did not make me";
or the thing formed say of the one who formed it,
"He has no understanding"?

¹⁷ Shall not Lebanon in a very little while
become a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field be regarded as a forest?

¹⁸ On that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a scroll,
and out of their gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind shall see.

¹⁹ The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,
and the neediest people shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰ For the tyrant shall be no more,
and the scoffer shall cease to be;
all those alert to do evil shall be cut off—

²¹ those who cause a person to lose a lawsuit,
who set a trap for the arbiter in the gate,
and without grounds deny justice to the one in the right.

²²Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham,
concerning the house of Jacob:

No longer shall Jacob be ashamed,
no longer shall his face grow pale.

²³For when he sees his children,
the work of my hands, in his midst,
they will sanctify my name;
they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

²⁴And those who err in spirit will come to understanding,
and those who grumble will accept instruction.

Devotional

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The prophets and seers are stumped. The human visions and plans constructed for our future are lost. And time and time again, the people of Israel come to worship God in rote rhythms dictated by human dogma. How often do we so easily seize the opportunities to make good! To prosper! To be victorious in our lives! But as the prophet cries to us, we're doing it all wrong when we believe ourselves to be the makers and creators in charge. We can at times so easily forget to turn to God as the potter and remember ourselves as the clay. Though our human power and arrogant wisdom can so easily turn things upside-down and in the wrong direction, there is grace in to be found, brothers and sisters: No matter how many times we try to root ourselves in our own plans rather than God's, God promises to do amazing things with God's people—AGAIN.

Prayer

Dear God, in this season of preparation, prepare our hearts and minds to be open to your amazing reversal of the world's darkness. Help us loosen our tight grip on our plans and understandings and instead rest in your promise of fresh joy and light. Amen.