

Advent Devotional November 29, 2022

Scripture

Isaiah 1:21-31

21 How the faithful city has become a harlot!

It was full of justice;

Righteousness lodged in it,

But now murderers.

22 Your silver has become dross,

Your wine mixed with water.

23 Your princes are rebellious,

And companions of thieves;

Everyone loves bribes,

And follows after rewards.

They do not defend the fatherless,

Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.

24 Therefore the Lord says,

The Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,

“Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries,

And take vengeance on My enemies.

25 I will turn My hand against you,

And thoroughly purge away your dross,

And take away all your alloy.

26 I will restore your judges as at the first,

And your counselors as at the beginning.

Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”

27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice,

And her penitents with righteousness.

28 The destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together,

And those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

29 For they shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees

Which you have desired;

And you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens

Which you have chosen.

30 For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades,

And as a garden that has no water.

31 The strong shall be as tinder,

And the work of it as a spark;

Both will burn together,

And no one shall quench them.

Devotional

The Rev. Peter Sutton, DMin student

This passage from Isaiah talks about transformation by virtue of having changed your ways.

Transformation and change are both classic themes of this Advent season. The key outcome is to be found in verse 26: “Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”

But to be this new city, the city of Zion, it will require its people to be on watch and alert to the coming of Christ. Many Advent carol services start with this great verse: “The Watchmen raise their voices, and together shout for joy, for with their own eyes they see the Lord return to Zion” (Isa. 52:8).

This Advent season, if we too are to experience the joy and the hope of the incarnation, we too must be prepared to be on watch. For surely the coming of a savior might catch us unawares and, if it does, we will have missed being part of the greatest story ever told.

My church—St. Cuthbert’s, The Mother Kirk of Edinburgh—lies at the foot of the Castle Rock, and there is a great sense of both Castle and church being alert and ready to welcome visitors to this great city. So it is with the words of the prayer of St. Cuthbert (below) that we too are now encouraged to help welcome the Christ Child once more into our world.

Prayer

“Open our eyes, Lord to see your glory. Open our ears Lord, to hear your call. Open our lips, Lord, to sing your praises. Then guide us on our pilgrimage of faith, that with the memory of Cuthbert in our minds, and the spirit of Cuthbert in our hearts, may we walk with him who is the way, the truth, and the life, and find our freedom in his service; even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.”