



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 6, 2022

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 94

- 1 O Lord, you God of vengeance,
you God of vengeance, shine forth!
- 2 Rise up, O judge of the earth;
give to the proud what they deserve!
- 3 O Lord, how long shall the wicked,
how long shall the wicked exult?
- 4 They pour out their arrogant words;
all the evildoers boast.
- 5 They crush your people, O Lord,
and afflict your heritage.
- 6 They kill the widow and the stranger;
they murder the orphan,

7 and they say, "The Lord does not see;
the God of Jacob does not perceive."
8 Understand, O dullest of the people;
fools, when will you be wise?
9 He who planted the ear, does he not hear?
He who formed the eye, does he not see?
10 He who disciplines the nations,
he who teaches knowledge to humankind,
does he not chastise?
11 The Lord knows our thoughts
that they are but an empty breath.
12 Happy are those whom you discipline, O Lord,
and whom you teach out of your law,
13 giving them respite from days of trouble,
until a pit is dug for the wicked.
14 For the Lord will not forsake his people;
he will not abandon his heritage;
15 for justice will return to the righteous,
and all the upright in heart will follow it.
16 Who rises up for me against the wicked?
Who stands up for me against evildoers?
17 If the Lord had not been my help,
my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence.
18 When I thought, "My foot is slipping,"
your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up.
19 When the cares of my heart are many,
your consolations cheer my soul.
20 Can wicked rulers be allied with you,
those who contrive mischief by statute?
21 They band together against the life of the righteous
and condemn the innocent to death.
22 But the Lord has become my stronghold
and my God the rock of my refuge.
23 He will repay them for their iniquity
and wipe them out for their wickedness;
the Lord our God will wipe them out.

DEVOTION

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Vengeance. It sounds like something the Prince of Peace should not desire. And yet as Christians we confess that that One is the same as the One this cry went up to in ancient times, and to whom it still goes today.

I want to imagine that peace is possible. I look to the themes of the other Advent candles (hope, love, joy) to get us there, but Jesus knows what we're up against. The cares of my heart are many *because* evil systems and wicked leaders ordain that it be so. I can reconcile with my co-worker who said a nasty thing to me about my appearance yesterday. But those who contrive mischief by statute? Who condemn innocent people to death row? The privileged proud who exult in their wickedness? All of these are systems. And hallmarks of White supremacy and Christian nationalism. Against these, the psalmist believes, God is—as God should be—*furious*.

Which is exactly why I pray the Psalms. The comfort of knowing that I am not alone in my experience on the hurting end of injustices in the world, and the shared unshakeable faith that God *does not* want things to be this way.

In Christ, repentance for the individual is always graciously offered. But there is no wicked *system* that survives God's judgment. Nothing evil that we have built makes it to the Kingdom intact. Thank God.

PRAYER

Show up, O God. As you have done in our history: ancestral and personal. Protecting. Saving. Rescuing. Helping. We need that now as much as we ever have. And make it so that no more such prayers need be sent. Bring down with your almighty hand every wicked system that harms, crushes, and exploits. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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