

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 9, 2016

Sonya-Marie Morley, M.Div. Student

SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 7:10-25

10 Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, 11 Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. 13 Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. 15 He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. 17 The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah - the king of Assyria." 18 On that day the LORD will whistle for the fly that is at the sources of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. 19 And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures. 20 On that day the Lord will shave with a razor hired beyond the River - with the king of Assyria - the head and the hair of the feet, and it will take off the beard as well. 21 On that day one will keep alive a young cow and two sheep, 22 and will eat curds because of the abundance of milk that they give; for everyone that is left in the land shall eat curds and honey. 23 On that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become briers and thorns. 24 With bow and arrows one will go there, for all the land will be briers and thorns; 25 and as for all the hills that used to be hoed with a hoe, you will not go there for fear of briers and thorns; but they will become a place where cattle are let loose and where sheep tread.

PSALM 148

1 Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
2 Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
3 Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
4 Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
5 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.
6 He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.
7 Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
8 fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
9 Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

- 10 Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
- 12 Young men and women alike,
old and young together!
- 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
- 14 He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

DEVOTIONAL

The word “Immanuel” in Isaiah’s prophecy explains why Advent is the season of solidarity. Just as we share time and space during Advent season by reading familiar narratives of Jesus’ birth, singing carols and hymns about the baby Jesus, breaking bread together and buying each other gifts to commemorate the greatest of gifts to the world, so the Divine, being poured into human flesh, shared time and space with us by living “among us.” Christ joined in radical solidarity with us: in service, supper, supplication, suffering, sin, sanctification, salvation and Spirit. It is this same sense that the psalmist uses as an invitation and imperative for all creation to join together to praise the One who created all and who relentlessly loves and seeks to reconcile all. Advent reminds us that Christ continues to join in solidarity with us, in each breath through the Holy Spirit, for God’s good, merciful, just, gracious, and redemptive purposes.

PRAYER

As we seek you, God, and wait expectantly to celebrate with great joy the anniversary of Christ’s birth, help us to hear how we are being called during Advent and always to stand in solidarity with those experiencing injustice and oppression, knowing that you show your face in unexpected ways and places—like the finite and fragile face of a babe in a manger all those years ago. Amen.

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