



# Images from Isaiah

Advent

2 0 2 3

## Wednesday Advent Devotion #1 – December 6, 2023

### We Praise Our God and Prepare Our Hearts

PASTOR: We worship our gracious God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – thanking him for all of his blessings this Advent.

**CONG: But, God’s undeserved love through Jesus is his very best gift to us.**

We don’t need to wait for Christmas to welcome God’s visit to our lives. God Himself already comes to us through his wonderful Word – *let’s prepare our hearts to meet him!*

*(sung)* **Arise, O Christian people! Prepare yourselves today. (CW 310:1)**  
**Prepare to greet the Savior who takes your sins away.**  
**To us by grace alone the truth and light were giv’n;**  
**The promised Lord from heaven to all the world is shown.**

Dear friends in the promised Messiah, for centuries Old Testament believers waited longingly for the Advent of their Savior too.

**They struggled as they waited – wondering if God would really keep his promise to come as he said.**

At times, we too struggle with the same frustration. We may wonder if God really will show up, if he will keep his promises to help and rescue us. And those doubts and misgivings reveal the sin-stained reality of our hearts. But God longs to heal us. So we bring our lack of faith together with all our sins and lay them at the foot of Jesus’ cross.

*(sung)* **Prepare the way before him, prepare for him the best. (CW 310:2)**  
**Cast out what would offend him, this great, this heav'nly guest.**  
**Make straight, make plain the way: The lowly valleys raise,**  
**The heights of pride abasing; his path all even lay.**

Father in heaven, we confess that we do not always find our greatest joy and comfort in your promise that Jesus HAS COME and WILL COME again. Instead, we often seek gratification in things we can buy and do; in your temporary blessings.

**Again this Advent season, we have already been distracted by our own needs.**

We are consumed with the less important preparations of the season and have ignored the preparation of our hearts. Lord, we are truly sorry for our sins and know we deserve your eternal punishment for them.

**Forgive us, O God - we trust in your unfailing love!**

*(sung)* **The humble heart and lowly God raises up on high; (CW 310:3)**  
**Beneath his feet in terror the haughty soul shall lie.**  
**The heart sincere and right, that heeds God's overture**  
**And makes true preparation: It is the Lord's delight.**

God's precious people, remember that Jesus DID COME that first Christmas! Your heavenly Father sent his Son to save you! He kept his promise to those OT believers and he has kept his promise to you. So, the "peace on earth" proclaimed by the Christmas angel, is YOUR peace! Jesus CAME to pay for your sin and earn your forgiveness. And that is what you are: FORGIVEN! Enjoy your peace – praise your God!!



*(sung)* **Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; turn not from me aside, (CW 310:4)**  
**And help me to receive you this blessed Advent-tide.**  
**From stall and manger low come now to dwell in me;**  
**I'll sing your praises gladly and forth your glory show.**

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## Our Prayer for Faith

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for coming to us in your Word of Truth tonight. As you have assured us of your forgiveness, we pray you also create the God-pleasing desire in our hearts... of hope.

**Let that hope live in our hearts despite any difficulty or trouble. Help us live our thanks to you each day in all we say and do. Amen.**

## Today's Devotion – Isaiah 64:1-9

Oh, that you would rip open the heavens and come down. Mountains then would quake because of your presence. <sup>2</sup>As fire ignites stubble and as fire makes water boil, make your name known to your adversaries. Then nations would quake in your presence. <sup>3</sup>You did amazing things that we did not expect. You came down. Mountains quaked because of your presence. <sup>4</sup>From ancient times no one has heard. No ear has understood. No eye has seen any god except you, who goes into action for the one who waits for him. <sup>5</sup>You meet anyone who joyfully practices righteousness, who remembers you by walking in your ways! But you were angry because we sinned. We have remained in our sins for a long time. Can we still be saved?

<sup>6</sup>All of us have become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy cloth. All of us have withered like a leaf, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. <sup>7</sup>There is no one who calls on your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you. So you hid your face from us. You made us melt by the power of our guilt.

<sup>8</sup>But now, LORD, you are our father. We are the clay, and you are our potter. All of us are the work of your hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not be angry, LORD, without limit. Do not remember our guilt forever. Please look closely. All of us are your people.

*Things I'd like to remember this week...*

### ***Advent Images from Isaiah***

## Our Thank-Offering

<sup>17</sup> *I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High. - Psalm 7:17*



## Our Evening Prayer

Praise and thanks are yours, Lord Jesus. Our humble hearts acknowledge that we could not save ourselves. But you have battled sin, death, and the forces of hell for us. Glory be to your name forever and ever! Come, Lord Jesus, and take us to the glories of your eternal kingdom, where we will join the hosts of heaven in singing your praise: *“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”* (Rev. 5:12). Now hear each of our hearts as we pray...

**I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

## Closing Blessing

*2 Corinthians 13:14*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Amen!**

## Our Closing Prayer – “O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide”

*(CW 314)*



**Musician:** Jason Muench

**Worship Leader:** Pastor Paul Bowe