

Advent Two  
Year of the Lord 2019

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;  
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”  
“Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!  
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to  
Thee!”**

**Isaiah 11:1–10** 1There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 2And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. 5Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. 6The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. 7The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. 9They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. 10In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

**Matthew 3:1–12** 1In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 3For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’”

4Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, 6and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming

for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 9And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

**11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”**

In the Name of Jesus:

The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, Saint John—brighter lights than THIS MAN have suggested we call the prophet read today in Church The Gospel According to Saint Isaiah! Just THIS VERSE commends the title:

9They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

I try to teach my Hebrew students at LSU that one of the happiest benefits of learning to read the Bible in Hebrew is that it naturally makes one S.L.O.W.....D...O...W...N.....

My dear friends, slowly now: “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

OK. Now, just how much of the sea is covered by water?

You can’t very well proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ without using the word ‘ALL!’

But why, beloved, does John the BAPTIZER—that’s his calling, to BAPTIZE, wash with water men agreeing with the verdict of the Law: ‘Burning wrath is coming to the world because of...ME!’....

Why, then, does the Baptizer drive AWAY men who, no doubt, WERE admitting that, if any needed pardon, THEY needed it?! The Sadducees—as far as I can tell—were in the religious ‘biz’ with both feet firmly planted in THIS WORLD; along with their minds and highest hopes. But changing your ways, fasting now and then, temple worship—these things were woven in to the religion of Israel, as well as all worshiping of all time. So, at the minimum, the sad Sadducees knew it was a good thing to go through the motions.

The Pharisees—as best I understand—were sincere about THEIR need for improvement! We go wrong when we interpret the words about them and their hypocrisy—which the Lord lays out in a full CHAPTER of Matthew, plus some!—we’re wrong to think the Pharisees never confessed sin.

I am still struggling, still praying, and still waiting for one of y’all to find me a word that does not so quickly ‘trigger’ people! But I am stuck on the word ‘bigotry!’ What I understand by that word is this way: ‘Well, I am a sinner too, and far from perfect! But AT...LEAST...I...AM...NOTTTT!!!....’ Fill in the blank—with ANYTHING, my dear ones, and John the Baptizer’s got NOTHING for you, for me, for the sad men and the unfair men.

But what about Jesus? For that matter, what about Isaiah?!

ALL the sea is covered by water, when NEW Solomon arrives, the UTTERLY NEW branch from the lopped off trunk of Jesse’s stem, a King like never before.

And carnivores will prefer a vegan lifestyle; and what comes MOST naturally to each of us—VIOLENCE!—will have no place....

WHERE?

Ah, beloved! Violence DIED, at a most violent place:

<sup>57</sup> Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. <sup>58</sup> And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end.

<sup>59</sup> Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, <sup>60</sup> but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward <sup>61</sup> and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’ ” <sup>62</sup> And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” <sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

<sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” <sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” <sup>67</sup> Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, <sup>68</sup> saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?” <sup>1</sup>

Later, they also rushed him off to be tortured to death. But THEY did the WORST!

HALLELUJAH!

SEE what is now OUT...OF...OUR...HANDS!!!! For good!

**12His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”**

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 26:57–68). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

‘Well, pastor, how do I prove to be wheat and now the dry outer husks of the wheat, the chaff? I’m up for it! Gotta save the old soul, y’know! I’ll even consider turning vegan, like the lions in Isaiah!’

THAT religion, THAT approach, THAT concluding—on our part-  
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Nothing can make us USELESS-ER!

Instead, the Greater One to come IS COUTING on you and me to  
R...E...M...A...I...N: VIOLENT!

Because HIS calling is to be the Prince of Peace!

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.”<sup>2</sup>

M...E...A..N...I...N...G:

REPENT as if you are chaff and useless and only fit for the fire!

But LIVE as if YOU—JUST YOU, AS YOU ARE, BEFORE  
YOU GIT REPENTIN’ OR NUFFIN!!!!!!---

God the Father is only pleased when YOU—BEFORE YOU  
TURN LESS VIOLENT!!!!!!—

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<sup>2</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Mt 16:24–27). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Call on Him with all boldness and confidence, as a dear child does his dear father.

The danger of bringing in simple, daily examples into my weekly book report here, is the danger of betraying a confidence. It HELPS, though, when E...V...E...R...Y last ONE OF Y'ALL complains the same COMPLAINT! Thank you!

‘Pastor, sometimes I wonder why we should even bring children into this world! What is going to happen? Is our world ever going to overcome the damage people are causing today? Will our nation? Will the Church? Now, you know, pastor, that I AM NOT perfect!----[By the way, THANK YOU, everyone, for reminding me of that!]----

‘You and I are not perfect; but just a few YEARS ago, it seems, the world made SOME SORT OF SENSE! But look at today! The PEOPLE today! How low can we sink? How far from godliness? How messed up can we become?’

I...REPEAT—before you get all upset that I am blabbing to the world what YOU told me privately—I cannot think of one of y’all who has not communicated this to me at some point. Or, maybe I’m just thinking that y’all are not THAT MUCH better than THIS BIGOT! (Mac suggested the phrase ‘self-righteous.’ It’s guuuud...but almost TOO religious sounding!)

HOW is the earth FILLED with the knowledge of the LORD, the Living God, the God of Abraham?

HERE’S HOW!

Christ Jesus was born of Mary. Christ was worshiped by pagan Magi. Christ was baptized by this John—THOUGH JOHN

TRIED TO STOP JESUS ALSO! What's THAT say about.....about ALL OF US?!!

Skip twenty chapters or so, and Christ was slapped around by the Sadducees, and mocked to death by the Pharisees. Why? Because, THIS Prince of Peace...He came to fulfill what Isaiah sang: to make natural-born enemies fit together like peas and carrots!

In a world—in men, who MUST...FIND...SOME...THING... to fill in the BLANK: ‘Well, at LEAST I am not \_\_\_\_\_.’

You can't have a Lutheran like Jesus Christ running around unchecked!

<sup>34</sup> “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup> And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. <sup>37</sup> Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup> And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. <sup>3</sup>

‘I ought-ta be burnt crispy. But I am baptized. Then, WHO can remain my “OTHER” ?’ My enemy; my opponent; my, ‘Well, at least I am not \_\_\_\_\_!’

<sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ <sup>39</sup> But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup> And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup> And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

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<sup>3</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Mt 10:34–39). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. <sup>4</sup>

You want a ‘sword?’ You want HEAVENLY PEACE—and a slap on BOTH CHEEKS? PRAY—WITH THIS BOLDNESS:

“Father in heaven....forgive us OUR DEBTS, for WE ALSO have ALREADY forgiven those WE dream our in OUR DEBT!’

Any work is a good work when it is a forgiven work.

And each prayer of ours is good, when Good God declares that prayer clean.

And PERFECTION will be TUTORED BY the likes of you—and ME!—when our faith says: ‘The earth is NOW full of the knowledge of the Lord; the same way that the sea is covered with water! That’s all of it!’

WE have been covered with water; and just ANYONE can get in on that! Happy Day!

I am baptized, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! Amen!

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<sup>4</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Mt 5:38–48). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.