



Faith-Sharing Questions First Week of Advent

HOPE

Advent is a time in which we look backward in order to look forward. It is a time where we hope in what God will bring about in our world because of what we know he has already done. That is how we prepare to both celebrate that our God took flesh and lived among us as one of us at Christmas, and ready ourselves more deeply for the return of Christ in the fullness of time. Advent is also a time when we recognize the continual abiding presence of God among us here and now.

The Hebrew Scripture passages for this week are filled with familiar imagery that yet seems other-worldly. It is because the prophets take very ordinary realities and place them in what seems nearly impossible circumstances. They also engage in two very particular ways of finding hope: 1) they look back in history to see the good things God has done, and 2) they choose to give thanks for things that are yet to come out of trust in what God will do.

This pattern by the prophets strongly root the virtue of hope in the context of gratitude.

Take a moment to reflect on this past year and ask yourself:

- What am I thankful for?
- What in this year has made me realize the goodness of God in the past?
- How can I give thanks today for what is yet to come?

You may wish to use one of the following passages from this week and from the prophets to help center your thoughts and your conversation.



Advent Series
2020
A Season of Hope

Isaiah 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7

You, LORD, are our father,
our redeemer you are named forever.
Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways,
and harden our hearts so that we fear you not?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage.
Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
with the mountains quaking before you,
while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for,
such as they had not heard of from of old.
No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you
doing such deeds for those who wait for him.
Would that you might meet us doing right,
that we were mindful of you in our ways!
Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful;
all of us have become like unclean people,
all our good deeds are like polluted rags;
we have all withered like leaves,
and our guilt carries us away like the wind.
There is none who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to cling to you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered us up to our guilt.
Yet, O LORD, you are our father;
we are the clay and you the potter:
we are all the work of your hands.



Isaiah 11:1-10

On that day,
A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.
The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:
a Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
A Spirit of counsel and of strength,
a Spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.
Not by appearance shall he judge,
nor by hearsay shall he decide,
But he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide aright for the land's afflicted.
He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.
Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
The calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.
The cow and the bear shall be neighbors,
together their young shall rest;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.
The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.
There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD,
as water covers the sea.

On that day,
The root of Jesse,
set up as a signal for the nations,
The Gentiles shall seek out,
for his dwelling shall be glorious.



Isaiah 25:6-10A

On this mountain the LORD of hosts
will provide for all peoples
A feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
On this mountain he will destroy
the veil that veils all peoples,
The web that is woven over all nations;
he will destroy death forever.
The Lord GOD will wipe away
the tears from all faces;
The reproach of his people he will remove
from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.

On that day it will be said:
"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!
This is the LORD for whom we looked;
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.

Isaiah 26:1-6

On that day they will sing this song in the land of Judah:
"A strong city have we;
he sets up walls and ramparts to protect us.
Open up the gates
to let in a nation that is just,
one that keeps faith.
A nation of firm purpose you keep in peace;
in peace, for its trust in you.
"Trust in the LORD forever!
For the LORD is an eternal Rock.
He humbles those in high places,
and the lofty city he brings down;
He tumbles it to the ground,
levels it with the dust.
It is trampled underfoot by the needy,
by the footsteps of the poor.



Isaiah 29:17-24

Thus says the Lord GOD:
But a very little while,
and Lebanon shall be changed into an orchard,
and the orchard be regarded as a forest!
On that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book;
And out of gloom and darkness,
the eyes of the blind shall see.
The lowly will ever find joy in the LORD,
and the poor rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
For the tyrant will be no more
and the arrogant will have gone;
All who are alert to do evil will be cut off,
those whose mere word condemns a man,
Who ensnare his defender at the gate,
and leave the just man with an empty claim.
Therefore thus says the LORD,
the God of the house of Jacob,
who redeemed Abraham:
Now Jacob shall have nothing to be ashamed of,
nor shall his face grow pale.
When his children see
the work of my hands in his midst,
They shall keep my name holy;
they shall reverence the Holy One of Jacob,
and be in awe of the God of Israel.
Those who err in spirit shall acquire understanding,
and those who find fault shall receive instruction.



Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26

Thus says the Lord GOD,
the Holy One of Israel:

O people of Zion, who dwell in Jerusalem,
no more will you weep;

He will be gracious to you when you cry out,
as soon as he hears he will answer you.

The Lord will give you the bread you need
and the water for which you thirst.

No longer will your Teacher hide himself,
but with your own eyes you shall see your Teacher,
While from behind, a voice shall sound in your ears:

“This is the way; walk in it,”
when you would turn to the right or to the left.

He will give rain for the seed
that you sow in the ground,
And the wheat that the soil produces
will be rich and abundant.

On that day your flock will be given pasture
and the lamb will graze in spacious meadows;

The oxen and the asses that till the ground
will eat silage tossed to them
with shovel and pitchfork.

Upon every high mountain and lofty hill
there will be streams of running water.

On the day of the great slaughter,
when the towers fall,

The light of the moon will be like that of the sun
and the light of the sun will be seven times greater
like the light of seven days.

On the day the LORD binds up the wounds of his people,
he will heal the bruises left by his blows.