

Reflection Questions

1. Reflect on this statement: "God steps into your mess." Consider journaling your reflections.
2. If you were to articulate the substance of your hope in Christ, what would you say?
3. What are some ways you can be a peace-maker?

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth:

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent and convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief:

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.



Jeremiah 23:5-6
Zechariah 9:9-10
December 13, 2015

The Problem With Kings

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch..." Jeremiah 23:5a (NIV)

A common metaphor among the prophets was a branch. The metaphor was meant to imply that the nation of Israel, God's chosen people, had become a stump or tree that had been cut down and was in need of a new branch to show new life.

Perhaps that had something to do with their problems with kings:

Kings of Israel	(North)	Kings of Judah	(South)
Jeroboam 1	Disobedient	Rehoboam	Disobedient
Nadab	Disobedient	Abijam	Disobedient
Baasha	Disobedient	Asa	Obedient
Elah	Disobedient	Jehoshaphat	Obedient
Zimri	Disobedient	Jehoram	Disobedient
Omri	Disobedient	Ahaziah	Disobedient
Ahab	Disobedient	Athaliah (queen)	Murderer
Ahaziah	Disobedient	Joash	Obedient
Jehoram (Joram)	Disobedient	Amaziah	Obedient
Jehu	Disobedient	Azariah (Uzziah)	Obedient
Jehoahaz	Disobedient	Jotham	Obedient
Jehoash (Joash)	Disobedient	Ahaz	Particularly Horrible
Jeroboam II	Disobedient	Hezekiah	Completely Faithful
Zechariah	Disobedient	Manasseh	Particularly Horrible
Shallum	Disobedient	Amon	Disobedient
Menahem	Disobedient	Josiah	Very Faithful
Pekiah	Disobedient	Jehoahaz	Disobedient
Pekah	Disobedient	Jehoiakim	Disobedient
Hoshea	Disobedient	Jehoiachin	Disobedient
		Zedekiah	Disobedient

NOTES:

Hope Of A New King

Jeremiah spoke of a king from the line of David who would be righteous, bring justice, and be the fulfillment of God's covenant to Israel.

Jesus Christ is that king.

God's Restorative Kingdom

600 years after Jeremiah spoke this king, Jesus comes as a new kind of king and establishes a new kind of kingdom. In his kingdom, things are made right for those who have suffered wrong.

- poor restored to prosperity
- sick restored to health
- suffering restored to well-being
- rejected restored to acceptance
- oppressed restored to liberty
- sinner restored to forgiveness

Jesus reveals God's heart to restore. The prophetic word is this: In the middle of your mess, God has not forgotten you!

NOTES:

God's Peaceful Kingdom

He will proclaim peace to the nations.

-Zechariah 9:10b (NIV)

Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey because, as king, he will get rid of the usual transportation for a king - the war horse. God's true king has no use for a war horse!

He does not establish peace with greater violence. He does not establish peace by giving weapons to the good people instead of the bad people. This king knows that if "peace" is won through violent force it is establishing a new kingdom on the same foundation and nothing has changed.

Rather, His peace comes by letting go of hate and fear and taking hold of the fact that all the hate, violence, and vengeance we are tempted to bring against one another has already been brought upon him. The prophet Isaiah says it this way in Isaiah 53:5, "He was beaten that we may have peace."

Prayer

*God of hope, you call us home from the exile of selfish
oppression to the freedom of justice,
the balm of healing, and the joy of sharing.
Make us strong to join you in your holy work,
as friends of strangers and victims,
companions of those whom others shun,
and as the happiness of those whose hearts are broken.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

—Revised Common Lectionary, Year C, Advent, Third
Sunday of Advent, Thematic ([http://
lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/](http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/))