

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?

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
December 5, 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 sprout to show new life.

The need for a new branch implied that the current state of Israel was poor. 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	Johaohaz	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 the branch of new life they needed
-reign wisely
-do what is right and just
-be called “The LORD Our Righteous Savior”

Righteousness, in this sense, doesn’t just mean noble character. It means means covenant faithfulness. There would come a king who was the embodiment of God’s covenant faithfulness.

Jesus Christ is that king.

NOTES:

God’s Restorative Kingdom

600 years after Jeremiah spoke those words, 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. He embodies God’s faithfulness and heart to restore the people of God.

The prophetic word is that in the middle of the mess, God has not forgotten you!

“Time’s coming”—God’s Decree—
“when I’ll establish a truly righteous David-Branch,
A ruler who knows how to rule justly.
He’ll make sure of justice and keep people united.
In his time Judah will be secure again
and Israel will live in safety.
This is the name they’ll give him:
‘God-Who-Puts-Everything-Right.’
(Jer. 23:5-6, MSG)

Advent is a time to live between longing and fulfillment. Tasting restoration, but not having it completely. Joy that Christ has come, but longing for everything to be put to right once and for all. May we live well in the in-between.

NOTES:

Prayer

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
(Source: Book of Common Prayer, Second Sunday of Advent, p. 211)