

Scripture: December 24, 2021

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)

²^[a] The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Psalm 96 (NRSV)

- ¹ O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- ² Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
- ³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
- ⁴ For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
- ⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
- ⁶ Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
- ⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- ⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.
- ⁹ Worship the LORD in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
- ¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."
- ¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
- ¹² let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
- ¹³ before the LORD; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

Hebrews 1:1-12 (NRSV)

1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son,^[a] whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³ He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains^[b] all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

The Son Is Superior to Angels

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son;
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son”?

⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God's angels worship him.”

⁷ Of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels winds,
and his servants flames of fire.”

⁸ But of the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, is^[c] forever and ever,
and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your^[d] kingdom.

⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

¹⁰ And,

“In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands;

¹¹ they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like clothing;

¹² like a cloak you will roll them up,
and like clothing^[a] they will be changed.

But you are the same,
and your years will never end.”

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:1-20

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[a] the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[b] praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”^[c]

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.