

Integrative Project

Option 2

Old Testament Introduction

Fall, 2004

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Newsletter Article:

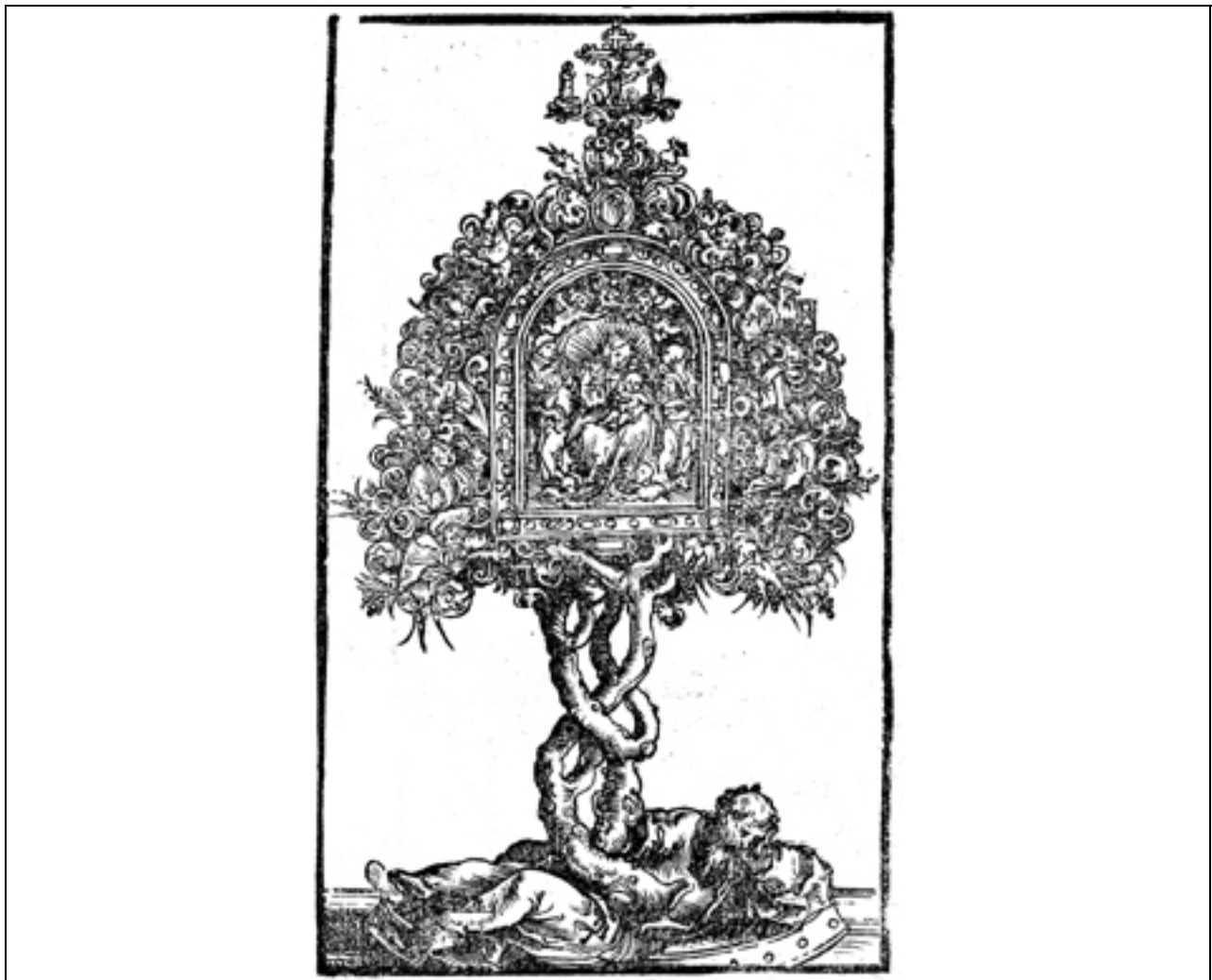
Has Advent Gotten Lost in Christmas?

Has your Advent season become a time of quietness, a time of preparation to celebrate what God has given the world in Jesus Christ? Or has your season of Advent become all about decorating and cleaning and buying and wrapping and cooking and entertaining?

We are spending time on four Wednesday evenings beginning December 1st at 7:00 pm to reflect on Isaiah and the Psalms and the hopeful anticipation of the coming of the Messiah. So if your Advent has gotten lost, join us for just 30 minutes (that's right, only 30 minutes) each Wednesday for a time of song, prayer, scripture, and Word as we wait with hope for a world where God comes among us.

Outline of services **(Focus text is highlighted):**

Week 1:



Bulletin Cover: *A Branch from the Stump of Jesse*, by Martin Luther/Philipp Melanchthon, found at Pitts Theological Library at www.pitts.emory.edu

Lighting of the Advent Candle

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (WOV #630), Verse 1, as one candle is lit

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, as we enter this journey of preparation for the celebration of your coming to us as Savior, we pray for your Holy Spirit to descend on us so that we may be a beacon of light and hope for your people in the world. Through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen

Scripture Readings:

Psalm 72.1-7, 18-19

Isaiah 11.1-10

Homily – *"A shoot from Jesse?"*

Song

"Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel" (LBW #34)

Offering (the offering is designated for Lutheran World Relief)

Special Music – *"Soon and Very Soon"* - This Far by Faith

Prayers – intercessory in the form of bidding prayers – the church, the nation and those in authority, the world, the community, the needy

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal

Week 2:



Bulletin cover – The Spring at En Gedi found at www.bibleplaces.com

Lighting of the Advent Candle

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” (WOV #630), Verse 2, as two candles are lit

Prayer of the Day

Majestic God, strengthen our hands and hearts as we prepare to celebrate your coming to us as our Savior Jesus. Open our eyes and our ears so that we may see and hear your presence with us. Through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen

Scripture Readings

Psalm 146.5-10

Isaiah 35.1-10

Homily – *“The blind shall see?”*

Song

“There’s A Voice in the Wilderness” (Renewing Worship #106)

Offering (the offering is designated for Lutheran World Relief)

Special Music – Handel’s Messiah – *“Then shall the eyes of the blind”*

Prayers – intercessory in the form of bidding prayers – the church, the nation and those in authority, the world, the community, the needy

Lord’s Prayer

Dismissal

Week 3:



Bulletin Cover – *“The Nativity with the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel”* by Duccio di Buoninsegna from the Andrew W. Mellon Collection found at www.nga.gov

Lighting of the Advent Candle

“*Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah*” (WOV #630), Verse 3, as three candles are lit

Prayer of the Day

Lord God in Heaven, come to us in our time of preparation. Give us faith to accept your word and hope for light in the darkness. Help us to recognize your son Jesus in the world. And through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray.
Amen

Scripture Readings

Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19

Isaiah 7.10-16

Homily – “*God is with us?*”

Song

“*All Earth is Hopeful*” (WOV #629)

Offering (the offering is designated for Lutheran World Relief)

Special Music – Handel’s Messiah – “*Behold A Virgin Shall Conceive*”

Prayers – intercessory in the form of bidding prayers – the church, the nation and those in authority, the world, the community, the needy

Lord’s Prayer

Dismissal

Week 4:



Bulletin Cover – “*For to us a child is born*” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, found from “*Bibel in Bildern*” at www.biblical-art.com

Lighting of the Advent Candle

“*Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah*” (WOV #630), Verse 4, as all four candles are lit

Prayer of the Day

Savior God, in our final days of preparation for the celebration of your Son coming to us on earth, we thank you for sending Jesus to us to be born so that He might die for our sins. As we await your glorious light, may we be ever thankful

and in awe of your authority and power and might. Through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen

Scripture Readings:

Psalm 89.1-2, 29, 36-37

Isaiah 9.1-7

Homily – “*God loves us how much?*”

Song

“*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*” (LBW #30)

Offering (the offering is designated for Lutheran World Relief)

Special Music – Handel’s Messiah – “*For unto Us a Child is born*”

Prayers – intercessory in the form of bidding prayers – the church, the nation and those in authority, the world, the community, the needy

Lord’s Prayer

Dismissal

A Shoot from Jesse?

Isaiah 11.1-10

First Wednesday in Advent - December 1, 2004

I’m so glad you’ve come tonight to visit. Let me introduce myself. My name is Agatha and I am an angel. You may not know that I’ve been around a really long time and seen a lot of things, but I have. In fact, I was around 2,000 years ago when Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph. And, as you know, that is the birth we are preparing to celebrate during this season of Advent. This wasn’t just an ordinary birth, however, because the baby that was born wasn’t just an ordinary baby. The baby was Emmanuel, Messiah, God. But there’s a lot more to this story than just a baby.

Like I said, I've been around a really long time and even though I was just a little angel about 740 years before Jesus was born, I remember a lot. There was this prophet back then from Jerusalem in Judah, the Southern Kingdom, who accepted God's call to tell the Jews what God wanted them to hear. There was this one particular day that Isaiah began talking about the future and he said a lot of what he called "messianic" things. Being so young, I really couldn't quite understand everything, but I tried hard to remember what he said so that one day I might ask someone to explain it to me. He started out making it sound like everything would be over, that the whole world would come to an end. He talked about judgment and destruction and he said that the nation of Israel would be reduced to, well, basically, what he called a stump. Then Isaiah began to tell about a shoot that would come out of that stump. He said the shoot would come from Jesse. Jesse was the Israelite nation's greatest king's father. I'm sure you've heard of the greatest king, David, haven't you? Well, this shoot Isaiah was talking about was a sign of hope, a sign that God still cared about the nation. It was a sign that maybe this would be a new king, an even greater king than David, who wouldn't disappoint the people like David's descendents did. That hope was surely something the people needed.

Isaiah also said that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on this new king. I really wondered a lot about that and what it could possibly mean. Then there came the day when Jesus was baptized. Jesus went to John the Baptizer at the river Jordan and asked John to baptize him, which John did. But when Jesus came out of that water, the heaven just opened up and God's Spirit came down like a dove and sat right down on Jesus. I knew then what Isaiah had been talking about. He had said that this life-giving spirit that would rest on this new king would bring wisdom and understanding, give direction and build strength, and instill knowledge and the fear of God. And that the fear of God would be his delight. These were all things that Isaiah said would be found in the new king because He would need them to rule fairly and justly. So when the spirit sat down on Jesus in the form of that dove, well, I had no doubt then that Jesus had all those qualities. I understood that Jesus was more than just a man born to a woman—he was a new king; and not just a new king, but a new type of king, a king that would fear God and recognize God's authority and be willing to surrender to it.

There was more, though, that Isaiah said. He said that the new king wouldn't judge with just his eyes and ears, but that he would judge the needy righteously and the poor with justice. Now that was sure welcome hope for the poor, by the way. You know, for the poor to be granted justice was something that seemed more like a dream than a real possibility. By being poor, a person didn't have money to bribe the judges, so they didn't have much pull in politics. I know it's not fair, but that's the way it was. Well, anyway, there was this one day after Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath that the priests were arguing with him that he had broken the law. He reminded those priests that they circumcised on the Sabbath, which was technically working. So He wanted to know why his healing was so wrong, since he had healed the whole man. Then He

told them to stop judging by mere appearances. It was then that I remembered Isaiah's words. How true, I thought, that it was about more than just what meets the eye. Jesus, obviously, being of one with God, was loyal to God alone, and not to man's laws. Therefore, he was able to judge all things correctly because Jesus would know the whole person, both inside and out, and could see through appearances to the real issues. That's definitely where the true character lies, in what is seen only to God. No other king before had ever had this ability, that's for sure.

One of the last things Isaiah said that day was that the root of Jesse would stand as a signal to the peoples. Now, that one really surprised me and I just couldn't figure it out. Until the day that Jesus' earthly parents brought him to the temple to have him circumcised and Simeon was there. God's Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. When Jesus was brought in that day, Simeon got so excited. He took Jesus into his arms and praised God and said that Jesus was a light for the revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of God's people Israel. So the root of Jesse, who I'm convinced is Jesus, was a signal to the peoples, plural. Jesus wasn't on earth just for the Jews; he was here for the whole world, even the Gentiles. Now that is surely news to rejoice about; surely news to celebrate.

So, every year when Advent rolls around, I think about these things. I think about Isaiah and all that God told him to tell the Jews and I think about Jesus and what his coming meant to the world. But I've got lots more to share. I hope you'll come back to see me again so I can tell you even more. But for tonight, God bless you and keep you and give you light for your path.