

# Wait Upon *the* Lord!

DEVOTIONS FOR ADVENT



Reed Lessing

*They who wait upon  
the LORD shall renew  
their strength; they shall  
mount up with wings  
like eagles; they shall  
run and not be weary;  
they shall walk  
and not faint.*

**ISAIAH 40:31**

## INTRODUCTION

Located on the front of the historic Trinity Church in Boston are the sculptures of six men. The four Gospel writers at the center are flanked by Paul on the right and Isaiah on the left. Isaiah's presence in this distinguished group speaks volumes about his importance for Christians in every generation. This Advent the prophet Isaiah will inspire us to wait for Jesus—our coming King—with great hope and anticipation. I invite you to journey to Bethlehem with this famous promise from Isaiah tucked deep in your heart: “Those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles” (Isaiah 40:31). A very blessed Advent to you!

*Reed Lessing, author*

## The Perfect King

*The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. ISAIAH 1:1*

**I**n Isaiah's day, kings were a mixed bag. King Uzziah—while succeeding militarily—at one point insisted on offering incense, a duty reserved for priests. He ended up dying under divine judgment (2 Chronicles 26:16-23). King Jotham did well in seeking advice from Isaiah and other prophets and was known for building the High and Upper Gate of the Temple of Jerusalem and built cities, castles and towers. King Ahaz didn't respond in faith to enemy nations attacking him. When told to ask for a sign from God, he refused (Isaiah 7:12). King Hezekiah stands out as the best of Judah's monarchs during Isaiah's ministry, yet he shows Babylonian envoys state treasures and then nonchalantly shrugs off divine retribution (Isaiah 39). There is a better king on the horizon! His name is Jesus.

Jesus comes to do what no king could ever do—deliver God's free and forever forgiveness. What does that mean? We don't have to live in the past, rehash the past, or be bound to the past. We only need to wait upon the Lord. We don't need more effort, more work, or more sweat and blood. The sweat and blood have been poured out, by Jesus, on the cross, for us.

**Jesus, this Advent, show us your forgiving love. Amen.**

# No More War

*Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.*

ISAIAH 2:4

When Jesus arrives, Isaiah envisions that nations, “... will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4). This verse was the vision behind the League of Nations, born out of the ravages of World War I. Although the League of Nations was unable to avert World War II, it eventually led to the formation of the United Nations, whose charter was signed on June 26, 1945, by representatives from 50 countries. The United Nations will never deliver perfect peace—but God will.

How? Advent! In this season of waiting, Advent points us to Christ’s cradle and Christ’s cradle points us to his cross. On Good Friday, Christ’s body was broken. His blood was shed. The heavens wept. As darkness descended, the angels were silent. But then the third day! The tomb is empty! Christ is alive!

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he inaugurated Isaiah’s vision of peace. Jesus will complete the vision when he returns to bring in his eternal kingdom where there will be no more weapons and no more wars. What a day that will be!

**Come, Lord Jesus, and bring us  
your eternal peace. Amen.**

## The Lord's Branch

*In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. ISAIAH 4:2*

**T**he story is told of a monastery in Portugal, perched high on a 3,000-foot cliff and accessible only by a terrifying ride in a gondola. The gondola ran along a single wire. Once a tourist got nervous when he noticed that the wire was old and frayed. The tourist asked a monk connected to the monastery, "How often do you change the wire?" The monk replied, "Whenever it breaks!"

Sometimes the wires holding our lives break. And then what? Isaiah says the Messiah is on his way to mend what is torn, fix what is broken, and heal everything that looks lifeless and dead. It is him on whom we wait. Isaiah 4:2-6 envisions the Messiah as a branch that will be beautiful and glorious, giving forgiveness, cleansing, and shelter for God's people. These promises are fulfilled at long last in Jesus, who is not only the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. He is also the executed rabbi, hanging on a cross. Christ did it all to record our names in his book of life (Isaiah 4:3).

**Thank you, Jesus, that when the wire breaks,  
you rescue us with hope and healing. Amen.**

## Ministering Angels

*Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings:  
with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet  
and with two he flew. ISAIAH 6:2*

**I**saiah has a thing or two to say about angels—he calls them seraphim. They surround God’s throne (Isaiah 6:1). They praise God, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isaiah 6:3). Using some tongs, one of the angels takes a coal from an altar and touches the prophet’s mouth. Then the angel says, “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for” (Isaiah 6:7).

During these waiting days of Advent, we also think a lot about angels. An angel tells Mary that she is going to have a son named Jesus. Another angel tells Joseph to take Mary as his wife. Still another angel tells the shepherds to go to Bethlehem, saying, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). And then there are myriads of angels singing, “Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth” (Luke 2:14). Thank God for angels. Thank God that angels point us to Jesus.

**Thank you, Father, for Isaiah’s angels—and for the angels of Bethlehem who pointed us to Jesus. Amen.**





**I**n Isaiah we come upon promises that move us mightily toward the New Testament’s proclamation that Jesus of Nazareth is Israel’s Messiah and the Savior of the world. These devotions from Isaiah will renew and enliven our hearts as we countdown to Christmas. “Those who wait upon the Lord ... shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

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