

## Notes for Next Sunday

First Sunday in Advent

### The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 64:1-9). God appears to have withdrawn His presence from the people crushed by adversity. They feel that He must come down from heaven to see their plight. When God shows Himself and His brilliant light and fire, mountains will quake and nations will tremble. When the Law was given at Mount Sinai, both the mountain and the people trembled (Ex 19:16, 18). Throughout the Bible, fire often announces God's presence. In this context, though, sorrow is expressed: if the Lord had sent his protecting fire, much like the "pillar of fire" that led Israel out of Egypt and on her way in the wilderness, the community would not be experiencing its present pain. In this reading, faith turns to the Lord in prayer. The prayer began with a recitation of "the many good things [the Lord] has done for the house of Israel" (63:7). Here the praying prophet pins his prayer onto the grace God had demonstrated to His people in the past. The climax of Isaiah's prayer is signaled by "but now" (64:8), as he transitions from a grief-stricken lament to a bold and confident faith.

Epistle (1 Corinthians 1:3-9). Paul highlights the strengths of the congregation, strengths God extends to all believers by His grace. We rejoice in our relationship to God: He has called us and sanctified us, and He will sustain us. (TLSB)

Gospel (Mark 11:1-10). Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly as King, openly accepting messianic titles and fulfilling several OT prophecies. The disciples and the crowds expect Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom. They celebrate His arrival at Jerusalem without a clear view of His express purpose: to die for the sins of the world. Jesus enters Jerusalem in humility to fulfill the plan of salvation by laying down His life for sinners. (TLSB)

*For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.*

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 64:1-9

**Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! <sup>2</sup> As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! <sup>3</sup> For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. <sup>4</sup> Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him. <sup>5</sup> You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? <sup>6</sup> All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. and like the wind our sins sweep us away. <sup>7</sup> No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins. <sup>8</sup> Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. <sup>9</sup> Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people.**

*64:1 rend the heavens.* It appears in the time set for this prayer as though the Lord had withdrawn Himself from men, had spread out an impenetrable garment across the heavens and hidden Himself from His children. This prayer makes bold to beseech God to tear this covering wide open and appear in the rift of the clouds. (Leupold)

*64:1 come down.* The prophet's chief petition is that God would come down and act to save Judah in some dramatic and powerful way. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

*64:4 no...God besides you.* Following Isaiah's lament that Yahweh could have and should have acted like he did in the days of old (63:19b–64:2 [ET 64:1–3]), in this verse he offers an interlude that celebrates a prominent theme in his book: no other god acts like Yahweh. (CC)

*64:5 you were angry.* God's anger culminated in the exile. (CSB)

*64:8 clay ... potter.* We are as God shapes us to be. God created and shaped the destiny of the chosen people as an artisan fashions clay into a vase. (TLSB)

*64:8 work of your hand.* Once more that appeal is to the Lord as father and Creator. Isaiah is willing to leave to God just how his prayer will be answered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

*64:9 Do not be angry.* This verse does not demand of Yahweh, but rather begs him. (CC)

*64:9 do not remember our sins.* Our disgusting sins separate us from God, yet faith turns to God and depends on His gracious promises. This turning to God in spite of sin finds power to pray trusting in the promises of God. As believers we have been taught to pray "in Jesus name." God has no reason to listen to our prayers. Yet when we come to Him in the name of Jesus, who has shed His blood to wash away our sins. God invites us to pray to Him as dear children ask their dear Father. We can pray with confidence and boldness because, in Jesus, God is our dear Father. This prayer boldly erupts from the heart of a believer who trusts in the gracious promises of the Lord. (PBC)

#### EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

**<sup>3</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup> For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—<sup>6</sup> because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. <sup>7</sup> Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. <sup>8</sup> He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.**

*1:4 thank.* In spite of the conditions which Paul knew to be existing in Corinth, he breaks forth in a hymn of thankfulness because they were believers, they had received grace from God. (CSB)

*1:5 have been enriched.* This is in the passive and therefore says that it is not something that came from them. They are enriched in a spiritual way in that they have been well taught in the Word and received the right understanding. Moreover, their Christian knowledge has already borne good fruits. (Stoekhardt)

*1:6 testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.* Preaching gives witness to Christ, and the Corinthians' faithful receiving of it demonstrates the Spirit's confirmation of the message. (TLSB)

*1:7 any spiritual gift.* These blessings originate in the Spirit of God. Our redemption is the chief gift (Rom. 5:15) and consequently the means God has given to equip His Church to minister to one another with that gift. (TLSB)

*1:8 keep you strong.* The gift of Christ's holiness made the saints holy; therefore, they will be kept "guiltless" in His innocence until His return. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 11:1-10

**As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>3</sup>If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’” <sup>4</sup>They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, <sup>5</sup>some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” <sup>6</sup>They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. <sup>7</sup>When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. <sup>8</sup>Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup>Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna! <sup>a</sup>” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” <sup>10</sup>“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest!”**

*11:1 Mount of Olives.* Directly east of Jerusalem, it rises to a height of about 2,700 feet, some 200 feet higher than Mount Zion. Its summit commands a magnificent view of the city and especially of the temple. (CSB)

*11:2 which no one has ever ridden.* Unused animals were regarded as especially suitable for religious purposes. (CSB)

*11:3 If anyone asks you.* The message concerning the colt is not directed specifically to the owner but to anyone who might question the disciples’ action. (CSB)

*11:10 the coming kingdom of our father David.* The Messianic kingdom promised to David’s son (2Sa 7:11–14). (CSB)

*11:11 went out to Bethany.* Apparently Jesus spent each night through Thursday of Passion Week in Bethany at the home of his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus (see 11:19; 14:13; Mt 21:17; Jn 12:1–3). (CSB)