

The Long Expected Gift

Thunder in the desert! "Prepare for God's arrival! Make the road straight and smooth, a highway fit for our God."

Isaiah 40:3, *The Message*

I remember as a young child, sitting alone in our dark living room, watching the twinkling lights of the Christmas tree and listening to Christmas music. I was so full of wonder and excitement I could hardly stand it. Wonder at the beautiful decorations, colors, and sounds of the season. Excitement at anticipating the wonderful gifts I was sure to receive on Christmas Day. I would be the envy of all of my friends as I described my gifts from Santa.

I still enjoy sitting quietly alone in my dark living room watching the lights on the tree and listening to Christmas carols. However, now my thoughts turn with anticipation to the birth of the Christ child. It is nice to set aside the pandemonium of the commercial side of Christmas to focus on its true meaning; to spend time reading the words of Isaiah telling us to "...prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3). And in Psalms, the description of a perfect king, and looking forward to the endless reign of the Messiah, who alone can rule with perfect justice and whose citizens will enjoy perfect peace. (Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19). Then, to read the testimony of John who confessed, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'make straight the way of the Lord'" (John 1:23). God was telling us to anticipate and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, even in the Old Testament.

Prayer: Dear Lord, as we enter the Advent season, let us take time to prepare the way in our lives and hearts for the greatest gift of all, as we anticipate the birth of your son, our savior, the Messiah, and the perfect king. Amen.

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Additional Scripture Readings:

Psalm. 72:1-7; 18-19

Isaiah 40:1-11

John 1:19-28