



# Come and See!

Week of January 11, 2026

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## The Word...

*"I have set my spirit upon [my servant],  
He shall bring forth justice to the nations.  
He shall not cry out nor raise his voice, nor let his voice be heard abroad.  
A shattered reed he shall not break, nor a guttering wick put out.  
In truth he shall bring forth justice"*  
(from Is 42:1-4, 6-7, Hebrew translation).

## Pondering the Word...

As Christians, we assign the role of "servant" to Jesus in this, the first of the Servant Songs in Second Isaiah. Most Jewish scholars say the servant is the whole nation of Israel. (A few suggest it refers to the "one like Moses" who is to come, or even to King Cyrus.) *"The statements about not crying out and not guttering a wick express the depleted state of Israel\* mentioned in 41:8-20. Israel will 'speak' through its weakness, its frailty showing dramatically that it was Yahweh who made them an instrument of divine justice"* (Richard Clifford, SJ from *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 850). (\* It's important to remember the "nation of Israel" we refer to biblically is not the same as the current political entity.)

*"Israel will speak through its weakness."* God's chosen people will speak, not from a position of military strength or political might, but through weakness and vulnerability. It reminds me of God's words to Paul in 2 Cor 12:9-10: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

So, in keeping with our theme this year: "Pay attention. Listen." ...What is your opinion? How willing are we as Christians or as Jews to allow weakness and vulnerability to be our *modus operandi*? We hear the words, "a Judeo-Christian nation" being used in the US. What would it look like for such a nation to bring forth justice in truth, without violence or war? And what does this mean for you individually in practical, everyday terms?

## Living the Word...

This is hard, but paying attention and listening, especially to Scripture, can be challenging (which is probably the reason lots of people choose not to pay attention). This is great material for a conversation with God. Personally, what will you do each day to demonstrate nonviolent resistance to the forces of evil and division?

As Christians, we believe the Kingdom of God is right here and now, and yet, as I write this, the US has launched an invasion on a sovereign nation. Is this the hallmark of a Christian nation? I challenge all of us this year to commit to paying attention to the words of Scripture, along with the lessons of history. There are those who say faith should not play a role in geopolitical arenas. And I respond as Jesus did to the disciples so concerned with restoring "the kingdom of Israel," reminding them to instead seek the kingdom of God.

## Personal Reflections and Ideas...

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**Mon, Jan 12:** *"How shall I make a return to the LORD for all the good he has done for me?"* (Ps 116). Wow! What a great question! **Provision: Ask this question each day!** The psalmist's answer is straightforward: "I will say thank you, I will always call upon the Lord as my salvation, and I will do all this, unabashedly, in the presence of all God's people. I will make it real." (See Thursday's reflection.) What's *your* answer to this question?

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**Tue, Jan 13:** *On the sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes* (Mk 1:21-28). Have you experienced hearing a homily or sermon from someone who "spoke with authority," who commanded attention, who made you really listen? I sure hope so. It makes such a difference! **Provision: Let Jesus speak to you.** As someone who has written scripture reflections for many years, I have great compassion for those who stand before their congregations, week after week, year after year and preach from the same Scripture passages. It is sometimes easier to teach as the scribes taught, referring to the details of the law. And I have great admiration for those who find a way to preach something new! If you are bored hearing the same old thing, perhaps you need to listen more closely to Jesus himself. Find a bible that shows Jesus' words in another color or typeface and put yourself in the scene of a story. Try to understand the context but pay attention and listen to what Jesus says. Then, converse with him. Share with him what you heard. Let him respond. You might find yourself astonished!

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**Wed, Jan 14:** *So, Eli said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening'"* (1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20). Isn't it nice of the Spirit to include something that fits so well with our theme! Too often, I find myself saying, "Listen, Lord, for your servant is speaking!" Who's the servant in this relationship?! **Provision: Listen, listen, listen.** Turn off the TV. Put the phone and computer in silent mode. But don't take Eli's first piece of advice: Don't go back to sleep. Say aloud a few times, *'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'* Breathe normally. Focus on your breath. Sit quietly for at least 15 minutes. (You can do it!) Now, this is the hard part: don't expect a specific answer. If you get one, Alleluia! But more than likely, this exercise, if done regularly, will lead you, in peace, to find the answer you need each day.

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**Thu, Jan 15:** *The people brought the ark of the LORD of hosts... The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were with the ark of God. ... It was a disastrous defeat... The ark was captured, and Eli's sons were among the dead* (1 Sm 4:1-11). Eli's sons are "worthless fellows" (Hebrew translation), drinking, carousing with women, and breaking all kinds of priestly rules. Not the kind of guys the Lord is going to favor in battle, ark or no ark. The lesson for us: possessing and parading symbols of God and faith means nothing; it is your actions in true faith that God sees. **Provision: Make it real.** A few weeks ago, I wrote, "God likes real." We've heard the admonition, "if you are going to sin, sin boldly," i.e., be aware of what you are doing so that when you come to a change of mind and heart, you'll know for what you are repenting! The people who most provoked Jesus' ire were hypocrites. Take a close look today at your own practices: Does your day-to-day life reflect a symbol or a real, lived faith?

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**Fri, Jan 16:** *The people refused to listen to Samuel's warning and said, "Not so! There must be a king over us. We too must be like other nations, with a king to rule us and to lead us in warfare and fight our battles"* (1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22). **Provision: Read this and reflect on this whole passage.** This reading is so pertinent it took my breath away. What freedoms, or which of your sons and daughters, are you willing to sacrifice for some vague sense of world dominance? What are you willing to give up to be like other nations? Pay attention! Please!

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**Sat, Jan 17:** *Saul met Samuel and said, "Please tell me where the seer lives." Samuel answered: "I am the seer"* (1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19). Saul has a basic question for the seer: "Where are my father's asses?" Before he even gets to ask the question, Samuel tells him the beasts have been found, and oh, BTW, I am anointing you as king of Israel. So, the moral is, "If you go off in search of asses, you may wind up a king!" (Sorry, I couldn't resist!) **Provision: God's call may come when we least expect it!** We hear in the gospel today of Levi's call from his post as a tax collector. Probably not what he was expecting! God can come to us when we are out searching for something else or even when we are in the midst of sin. The grace Saul and Levi receive is the willingness to abandon the lives they've known to follow God's call. How ready are you to follow?