

# First Sunday in Advent

**“THE LOGOS IS COMING! THE LOGOS IS COMING”**

**Isaiah 2:1-5**

**First Sunday of Advent**

**Analysis by Marcus Felde**

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

*2In days to come*

*the mountain of the Lord's house*

*shall be established as the highest of the mountains,*

*and shall be raised above the hills;*

*all the nations shall stream to it.*

*3 Many peoples shall come and say,*

*“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,*

*to the house of the God of Jacob;*

*that he may teach us his ways*

*and that we may walk in his paths.”*

*For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,*

*and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

*4He shall judge between the nations,*

*and shall arbitrate for many peoples;*

*they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,*

*and their spears into pruning-hooks;*

*nation shall not lift up sword against nation,*

*neither shall they learn war any more.*

*5O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!*

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## **DIAGNOSIS: In Days Gone By**

**Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem)** : *Fertilizer into Bombs*

The sad state of things in Isaiah's day was depicted with realism in chapter 1, immediately before this pericope. Due to a bad connection between God and people, violence had taken over. Plowshares were being beaten into swords! (A modern analogy? The use of fertile-izer to make "unfertile"-izers, i.e., bombs.) We take the good gifts of God and use them to reduce creation to the chaos from which we were rescued in another chapter 1, at the beginning of the Bible. ("We're going to make the rubble bounce," say the generals. God said it was "very good." Kaboom! And now it is "very gone.")

**Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem)** : *Any Fort in a Storm*

Whether in Isaiah's world or ours, each people makes its own way by raising up for itself a pile of rocks or a hill or a little mountain to elevate and defend itself and offend others. Out of molehills we make monoliths like Uluru [Ayers Rock, in Australia, largest known monolith in the world]. We are perversely loyal to whichever pseudo-god will serve us the tonic we want. Monolith-theism, anyone?

**Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem)** : *Out of Zion, Destruction*

Sooner or later, such a world will "come to a pretty pass," because actually it all does belong to one God, who is not amused by our "rock collecting." He leaves a few survivors (Isa. 1:9), but not many. Actually, the Lord is weary of us, the way we are. We will not stand.

## **PROGNOSIS: In Days to Come**

**Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution)** : *Out of Zion,*

### *Instruction*

“Out of Zion” (v. 3) shall go forth in-(as opposed to de-)struction? Could this instruction be the Word of a Lord? One expects lords to act like the French kings who called their cannons “ultima ratio,” the last resort. But here is a reported resort beyond that last resort. The Lord will “talk” things right. Do we need any help to see “Logos” in the fulfillment of this promise? Did not a crucified-and-resurrected Logos tell his disciples to go out with a teaching from Zion, to all the world? Begin in the city (that mountain fastness), after you receive power?

### **Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : A Particular Fort**

No longer shall there be any argument about whose hill is higher, whose sword is longer, whose reign will supersede whose. One mountain (from which “my help cometh,” cf. Ps. 121) is to be exalted above all others: Calvary. All nations will stream that way, seeking the Logos of the Lord which will make all division go away.

### **Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : Swords into Plowshares**

Then, why mothball our battleships? Why keep the bush knives under our pillows? Why not make something useful out of them? Let’s make church bells once again out of our cannons, o Swiss burghers! Let us dance to the bagpipes that once led us into war! Retire the trumpets to the concert halls! And while we’re at it, improve our neighbor’s crops with that fertilizer!