



Blest Be the God of Israel

If peace were not possible, our myriad songs of peace would be nothing more than frustrating clutter. If God With Us did not matter, our songs of advent would be nothing more than starting pistols, sounded to begin an annual shopping frenzy.

But peace is possible and Jesus did come and the call to living lives of peace is the call to live as Christ-followers...even in our day. We are set free to see the world in a different way, different than those who are still imprisoned in fear.

Advent might be described as the transformation of weakness into meekness: our strength transformed into God's strength, self-reliance giving way to faith in The Way. "Blest be the God of Israel who comes to set us free." Pitied be the people who refuse to be set free.

Indeed, we with our tightly clinched eyes and fists and hearts are to be pitied. And God does have pity on us. God continues to offer us lives of peace through the teachings of Jesus and the presence of Holy Spirit. Blest be the God of Israel who comes, and comes, and comes to us, with pity and patience, forgiveness and love. Perhaps this season of advent will be the time when we allow ourselves to be freed from fear...when our weak strength can relax. Peace and rest: Christmas gifts of the Heavenly sort...unless our hands are no longer able to stretch forth to receive.

But still the God of Israel comes to us. And the prophets and angels plead with us to believe and rejoice. And still we hope for light.

The image of "a child of grace," found in stanza two, might just be the light, might just be the notion that releases our tired clinched fists and eyes and hearts. A child of grace that we might embrace and who will embrace us; this is not grace blanketed in naiveté, this is grace with the hope and the future of a newborn child.

Blest be the God of Israel who comes in whatever form it takes to free us from our fear and darkness.

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