



ISAAH
THE STORY BENEATH THE STORY

Tidings of Comfort and Joy



Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The celebration of Advent is possible only to those troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come.

A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,

and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,

and the rough places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

and all flesh shall see it together,

for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

vv. 3-5

A voice says, "Cry!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

vv. 6-8

Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

vv. 10,11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

vv. 1-2



Frederich Buechner

The Gospel is bad news before it is good news. It is the news that man is a sinner, to use the old word, that he is evil in the imagination of his heart, that when he looks in the mirror all in a lather what he sees is at least eight parts chicken, phony, slob. That is the tragedy. . .

Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
"My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God"?

v. 27

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases
strength. . . .

Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the LORD shall renew
their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

vv. 28-31



Nate Jackson

By the time I saw John Taylor catch the winning touchdown from Joe Montana in Super Bowl XXIII, I was a full-fledged, capital-B Believer. Whatever I could do to get there, I would. And I did. And once I put on my pads, like all football players, I became a prisoner of my success. . . .



Nate Jackson

No matter how rough things got, though, I always worked my way back, never wanting an injury to define me. Never wanting weakness to be my final act That's what grandpa expected, that's what dad expects, and what all of your coaches and friends and neighbors expect. That kid who told you you'd never make it. That coach who cut you in college. You'll show them all. You'll have the last laugh. . . .



Nate Jackson

And so you play until they drag your lifeless body from the grass, and it's all you can do to muster a thumbs-up as they wheel you into the tunnel, knowing that's how you secure your legacy.



Aimee Mann, "Wise Up"

You're sure
There's a cure
And you have finally found it
You think
One drink
Will shrink you 'til you're underground
And living down
But it's not going to stop
It's not going to stop
It's not going to stop
'Til you wise up



So just...give up

Aimee Mann, "Wise Up"



Madeleine L'Engle

*...He came to a world which did not
mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.*

*We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!*