

THE CANDLES OF ADVENT

The **Second Candle** of the Advent wreath has been called the **Candle of Bethlehem**. It represents the spirit of hope with which God's people waited for the promised Savior. We think about the hope in our hearts as we prepare for the coming of our Savior.

Lessons for The Second Sunday in Advent, Series C

Isaiah 11:1–10 ~ *A branch from Jesse's line will usher in the age of God's righteousness.*

Romans 15:4–13 ~ *Even the nations will hope in Jesus, the root of Jesse and the hope of Israel.*

Matthew 3:1–12 ~ *John's call to repentance brought hope that God's kingdom was coming.*

God's Commitment to Hope – With God's people in captivity in Babylon, Isaiah held before them the hope of restoration to Jerusalem with peace and security. Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, the Root of Jesse, who rules over the nations and draws Jew and Gentile into his Church. Because the Kingdom of Heaven was appearing in Jesus, John urged people to prepare for the Messiah's coming by committing their lives to Him and showing their commitment through righteous living.

Our plans and expectations in this world often cover up the hope of God's kingdom. While God judges the poor and the oppressed with the word of his righteousness, we evaluate our situation with what appears good to us or what sounds like it makes good sense. John calls us to repentance and summons us to enlist in the one people of God, where He works righteousness through Jesus the Christ, the hope of Israel and the redemption of the nations.

A Prayer for Advent 2: Lord, stir up my heart with your grace so that I may live confidently in the hope you have given me through the promise of Christ's kingdom. Keep me ready to welcome him at all times so that I may live faithfully in the fellowship of your holy people. Amen.