

2 Advent  
December 2, 2009  
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### **“This Train is Bound for Glory”**

Jeremiah was essentially the prophet of Jerusalem; Baruch was his biographer and companion on all his journeys. As scripture scholarship has progressed over the last 100 years, it was discovered that Baruch indeed wrote much of the Book of Jeremiah, one of the largest collections of prophetic literature in the Old Testament.

Baruch's outburst of joy in today's reading is a reference to Israel returning home after her long exile in Babylon. It did not happen quite that way. The people did return, but only in drips and draps. They found, others occupying their farms and homes and Jerusalem lying in ruins. Despite all that, Baruch's oft quoted passage, becomes a messianic hope. It says that no matter how deep and steep the climb will be, Israel will recover and climb out of recession, and the tragic death of defeat and humiliation. As the years rolled on by, this hope was seen as holding the promise of a savior, a redeemer, a messiah.

We all have things that we would want to be set free from: illness, family-loss and personal tragedy, probably top our list. When these things do strike, we remember how joy once filled our lives. We miss the feeling of being care-free and having the sense that anything was possible.. We lose all of that when tragedy strikes and illness cripples. Instead, the Peace we once had, is replaced by memory, regret and sorrow. No wonder the greeting: “Peace Be With You!” so characterized Jewish literature. Peace is truly a state of mind and one that we should cherish. Finding Peace in our lives and within ourselves, is a gift that encompasses: - forgiveness, love, wellbeing and acceptance. The Advent message is that Christ and his coming bring us Peace. He restores the Peace that we have lost.

Rainbow Sunday comes around each year and allows us as a community to invite all our friends into an atmosphere of Peace and love. We particularly today welcome our Gay friends. Surely, this passage from Baruch, of Israel returning home, applies equally to all of us. We all need to come home to a warm fire, old friends and warm hearts. Rainbow Sunday says: “welcome – and feel welcome and among friends, in a place where Peace is cherished.”