

## **Sabeel Advent Bible Study 4**

### **A Future without Apartheid: A Cry for Hope before the Coming King**

In preparation for this final Advent Bible Study we recommend you read "A Dossier on Israeli Apartheid" prepared by Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice.

Download a copy here:

<https://www.kairospalestine.ps/images/kp-a-dossier-on-israeli-apartheid-main.pdf>

In the introduction, Patriarch Michel Sabbah and Rifat Kassis write:

"In this guide, you will find: a clear description of apartheid and how Israel's laws, policies and practices meet the international definition; a Biblical/theological reflection describing the sin of apartheid; a heartfelt call to the global church to hear the pleas of Palestinian Christians; and a list of recommended actions. Also included are brief summaries of and links to many of the reports cited above, statements made by churches, faith groups, and international leaders (including prominent Israeli Jews), and a short book list. We call upon the churches around the world to receive and study this Dossier and respond to the evidence and the call to do justice. It is our hope that this study will equip the global church to rise up and join Palestinian Christians as we work to end Israel's apartheid regime for the sake of all who live in the Holy Land."

Please share the Dossier with members of your church and encourage your leaders to discuss it and respond to the *Cry for Hope* from church leaders in Palestine.

We hope this 4<sup>th</sup> Advent Bible study will assist you in understanding God's will for the future.

1. What principles you have observed from the first three Bible studies?
2. Read Amos 5:21-24 and Isaiah 59:14-16.

*"I hate, I despise your religious festivals;  
your assemblies are a stench to me.  
Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,  
I will not accept them.  
Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,  
I will have no regard for them.  
Away with the noise of your songs!  
I will not listen to the music of your harps.  
But let justice roll on like a river,  
righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:21-24)*

*"So justice is driven back,  
and righteousness stands at a distance;  
truth has stumbled in the streets,*

*honesty cannot enter.  
Truth is nowhere to be found,  
and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.  
The Lord looked and was displeased  
that there was no justice.  
He saw that there was no one,  
he was appalled that there was no one to intervene;  
so his own arm achieved salvation for him,  
and his own righteousness sustained him.” (Isaiah 59:14-16)*

3. What are the common themes in these two passages?
4. Who does Isaiah say will bring justice?
5. Read the following passages and discuss your observations.

*“Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord their God.  
He is the Maker of heaven and earth,  
the sea, and everything in them—  
he remains faithful forever.  
He upholds the cause of the oppressed  
and gives food to the hungry.  
The Lord sets prisoners free,  
the Lord gives sight to the blind,  
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord loves the righteous.  
The Lord watches over the foreigner  
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.  
The Lord reigns forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all generations.  
Praise the Lord.” (Psalm 146:5-10)*

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn.” (Isaiah 61:1-2)*

*“He [Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:*

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.  
Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes  
of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to  
them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21)*

6. What observations can you make about the character and will of God?
7. What is the significance of Jesus quotation of Isaiah 61 in his first sermon?
8. What are the implications for disciples (followers) of Jesus?
9. Read Luke 19:1-9.

*"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:1-9)*

10. What is restitution and why is it necessary for salvation?
11. How must the principle of restitution be applied in Palestine before there can be peace and reconciliation?
12. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.

*"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:16-20)*

13. What has been committed or entrusted to the followers of Jesus?
14. How are his followers described?
15. Where do ambassadors serve? Where does Jesus expect us to serve?
16. How does our mandate relate to that of Jesus in Luke 4?
17. Read Revelation 21:1-5, 22:1-2.

*"Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." (Revelation 21:1-5)*

*"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1-2)*

18. What is your vision for the future?
19. How does your vision compare with the vision in Revelation 21 and 22?
20. Is this just an aspirational hope? If not, what are the implications for now?
21. With Christmas just a few days away, reflect on this well-known passage:

*"For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.*

*The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
will accomplish this.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)*

22. How does this passage motivate you to pursue justice, peace and reconciliation, especially in Palestine?
23. From what you have discovered in this study, how is apartheid a contradiction of Biblical faith?
24. In what ways are Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people a matter of theological urgency and represents a sin in violation of the message of the biblical prophets and the Gospel.
25. What action steps will you make in the light of what you have learnt from these Advent Bible studies?

For further resources and books see the Appendix in A Dossier on Israeli Apartheid.