



Reflection by Greg Sunter

The second and third weeks of Advent this year focus particularly on the role of John the Baptist as the one who prepared the way for Jesus and announced his coming. It continues the theme of preparation that was begun last week, but still, rather than preparing for the birth of Jesus, we are exploring the wider theme of preparation. The gospel writer includes a quote from Isaiah in which the prophet says, 'Prepare a way for the Lord.' (Often translated as 'Prepare the way of the Lord'.) The application of this passage to John the Baptist is a logical one. This gospel emphasises that John was preaching 'a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins'. Throughout the gospel of Luke, the recognition of sinfulness and the desire to repent and seek forgiveness is the prelude to receiving God's favour.

This gospel makes it clear that one way in which we can prepare a way for the Lord is to recognise our faults and failings and to seek forgiveness. It is only through such repentance that we can make ourselves receptive to the love of God. The only preparation of the way that is necessary for the Lord is a personal preparation to be receptive. We are absolutely assured of God's love. The problem is that we often feel that we are undeserving of that love or are unable to receive it. When we are called to 'Prepare a way for the Lord' it is a call to prepare a way in our own hearts – to break down the barriers that we have put up; to clear the obstacles that we have placed in the path. God's love will find a way! We simply make the way easier for ourselves to recognise God's love if we 'Prepare a way'.

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Gospel Acclamation Lk 3:4. 6

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Prepare the way of the Lord, make
straight his paths:*

all people shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 3:1-6

All people shall see the salvation of God.

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness;
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley will be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low,
winding ways will be straightened
and rough roads made smooth.
And all mankind shall see the
salvation of God.

The Living Word

Second Sunday of Advent, Year C

5 December 2021

First Reading Bar 5:1-9

Jerusalem – God will show you splendour.

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress,
put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever,
wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you,
put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head:
since God means to show your splendour to every nation under heaven,
since the name God gives you for ever will be, 'Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness'.

Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights
and turn your eyes to the east:
see your sons reassembled from west and east
at the command of the Holy One, jubilant
that God has remembered them.
Though they left you on foot,
with enemies for an escort,
now God brings them back to you
like royal princes carried back in glory.
For God has decreed the flattening
of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills,
the filling of the valleys to make the ground level
so that Israel can walk in safety under the glory of God.
And the forests and every fragrant tree will provide shade
for Israel at the command of God;
for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory
with his mercy and integrity for escort.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 125. R. v.3

*(R.) The Lord has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy.*

1. When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,
it seemed like a dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs. (R.)
2. The heathens themselves said: 'What marvels
the Lord worked for them!'
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad. (R.)
3. Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. (R.)
4. They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full
of song,
carrying their sheaves. (R.)

Second Reading Phil 1:3-6. 8-11

Show yourselves sinless and without blame in the day of Christ.

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.