

**BIBLE STUDY**  
**November 29, 2021**

**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Baruch 5: 1-9**

**Luke 3: 1-6**

**Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11**

**1. Baruch 5: 1-9**

- Baruch was an assistant to Jeremiah. His book contains four different compositions: a confession of guilt; praise of wisdom; a poem of consolation; and a letter from Jeremiah. The whole book has a fictional setting of Babylon with Baruch reading his scroll to the King Jechoniah and the exiles. They send a letter to Jerusalem with a collection of money and return the vessels that had been taken from the Temple. Our selection comes from the Poem of Consolation and it resembles Isaiah 40-66.
- V. 1: The people of the city of Jerusalem are told to take off the robe of mourning (which is the exile) and put on the splendor of glory (the return home).
- V. 2: The Lord restores them. The restoration is symbolized by a mantle and a diadem.
- V. 3: God will make their salvation known to all. Just as they were disgraced before the nations, now they are raised up.
- V. 4: He bestows on them lavish titles of glory.
- V. 5: Jerusalem is personified as standing on a high mountain and watching its children returning home from exile from the east and from the west. They are gathered by God's word and the people rejoice that God has remembered them and saved them.
- V. 6: They were led into exile on foot but return home carried on royal thrones.
- V. 7: This is an embellished repetition of Isaiah 40:4
- V. 8: The trees make a canopy of shade and fragrance to protect Israel as they return.
- V. 9: This is God's initiative. He is leading Israel in joy and light with mercy and justice. They are being restored.

**2. Luke 3: 1-6**

- V. 1-2: The introduction of John the Baptist is placed with the framework of secular history. Luke names the Roman officials of emperor governor and tetrarchs. Then follows the Jewish high priests. Luke wants us to see the "sacred events" of salvation to be part of human history. They were not a meta-history or a parallel track but infused together.
- Pontius Pilate, Herod, Annas and Caiaphas will all play a role in the passion and death of Christ. Their names stand ominously at the beginning of the story like clouds upon the horizon.

- V. 2: John is portrayed as a prophet—“the word of the Lord came to him in the desert.” He is the last of the Old Testament prophets. John’s view of history is: the OT prophets up to and including John; the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus; the age of the Holy Spirit and the Church (Acts)
- V. 3: John’s ministry was to preach and baptize. He preached a message of repentance and forgiveness as was foretold in Zachariah, his father’s, hymn of praise for his birth: he will give the people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins.
- V. 4: John fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah in Isaiah 40: 4 (and echoed in Baruch 5: 7) that he would be a voice preparing the way for the Lord.
- V. 5: The transformation of the landscape to prepare the way of the exiles on their way home to Jerusalem is seen as now fulfilled by the preaching of John which prepares the way for Jesus.
- V. 6: The salvation preached by John will be for all people: all flesh shall see it together
- The baptism of John was different from Christian baptism which connects the believer to the salvation won by Jesus’ death and resurrection. His was a symbolic washing to express the desire that a person had for forgiveness and transformation.

### **3. Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11**

- Paul’s letters always begin with a hymn or prayer of thanksgiving. This selection comes from the thanksgiving.
- V. 4-5: Paul has a particularly close relationship with the Philippians. Their progress in the faith and their practice of Christian virtues were his pride and joy. He boasts of their “partnership for the gospel.”
- V. 6: A beautiful verse—the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of the Lord Jesus. Reminding us of the mustard seed, small beginning lead to great endings in the Kingdom of God. God has begun a good thing in the Philippians and he will bring it to completion for the return of the Lord in glory (the day of Christ Jesus).
- V. 8: As they are his pride and joy he longs for them with the love of Christ Jesus.
- V. 9: He prays for the Philippians that their love increases as they grow in understanding.
- V. 10: This increase in knowledge and perception will help them to “discern” what is truly important and make them ready for the Parousia (the return of the Lord in glory as judge).
- V. 11: They will be filled with the righteousness (a right relationship with God) that we receive through Jesus Christ which brings glory and praise to God.