

BIBLE STUDY
December 5, 2022

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10

Matthew 11: 2-11

James 5: 7-10

1. Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10

- This prophecy, although it sounds very much like the second Isaiah (chapters 40-55) it is composed by the first, historical Isaiah. The themes are very familiar themes of Isaiah: blossoming wilderness, sight to the blind, a highway in the wilderness, return of the redeemed and ransomed to Zion.
- Vv. 1-2: The blooming wilderness and the beauty of the mountains tells the splendor and glory of God.
- V. 3-4: Healing and encouragement for the weak and crippled. God is coming to save his people and to take away their shame.
- V. 5-6: The blind shall see, the deaf will hear, the crippled will walk, and the mute will speak. Water will be abundant in the desert. Water is life.
- V. 10: The procession of the redeemed and ransomed form a procession as they go home. They are singing and rejoicing as they go. Sorrow and mourning flee; joy and gladness accompany them.

2. Matthew 11: 2-11

- V. 2: John the Baptist is in prison because he challenged King Herod about the unlawfulness of his taking his brother's wife as his own.
- V. 3: John sends messengers to Jesus to ask if he is truly the Messiah or not. Jesus' deeds of mercy and healing are not what John expected. He was expecting a Messiah who would come as Judge and who would punish the evil doers severely. He saw the time of the Messiah as a time of judgement and vindication.
- V. 4: Jesus tells the messengers to report to John what they see and hear. The deeds of Jesus are clear, visible, and concrete.
- V. 5: The works of the Jesus are: giving sight to the blind, making the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. These signs are what Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would do.
- V. 6: John seems to be disappointed or shocked that Jesus is so merciful. This is not what he expected the Messiah to be. It causes him to doubt if Jesus really is the Messiah. Jesus urges him to believe and not be turned around by the surprise.
- V. 7: Jesus praises John to the crowds. He praises him for being strong and determined and not wishy washing. He commends him for his austere lifestyle. Jesus reveals that John is more than a prophet. He has the special mission of announcing the arrival of the Messiah. Isaiah prophesied about his coming in Isaiah 40: 3

3. James 5: 7-10

- James encourages all to be patient until the Lord returns. Just as the farmer patiently waits for the harvest, so we must wait for the Lord to return with reward and vindication. We must bear the conflicts of life as we wait for the Lord. Do not get into arguments with others that might lead to your being judged. Let the Lord, who is at the gates, be your only judge. The prophets, who suffered persecution, and Job, who persevered through many trials, are our models for patient endurance. The Lord is compassion and mercy. His purpose is to save us. Hold out for his return.