

BIBLE STUDY
December 3, 2018

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Baruch 5: 1-9
Psalm 126
Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11
Luke 3: 1-6

1. The theme of the Second Sunday of Advent is John the Baptist
 - John is a very significant religious figure in Jesus' time
 - Luke says he is a relative of Jesus
 - Was Jesus a disciple of John?
 - Did they belong to the Essene community?
 - Scriptures assert that Jesus was greater than John
 - John was identified with Elijah
 - John's baptism was different from Jesus'
 - Jesus had high praise for John
 - In Advent, John prepares the way for the Lord; mountains made low, valleys filled in, crooked ways straight and rough place plain.

2. Baruch
 - The secretary of Jeremiah

 - Baruch is one of the Deutero-canonical or Apocryphal books: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom (also called the Wisdom of Solomon), Sirach (also called Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, including the Letter of Jeremiah (Additions to Jeremiah in the Septuagint) 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, additions to Esther (Vulgate Esther 10:4 to 16:24), Additions to Daniel: Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Holy Children (Vulgate Daniel 3:24–90), Susanna (Vulgate Daniel 13, Septuagint prologue), Bel and the Dragon (Vulgate Daniel 14, Septuagint epilogue)
 - Written in Greek
 - Often combined with Jeremiah
 - Quoted often by the early Church fathers
 - Four sections
 - 1. Letter to Jerusalem
 - 2. Praise of Wisdom
 - 3. Baruch's Poem of Consolation
 - 4. Letter of Jeremiah
 - The selection for Sunday comes from the Poem of Consolation
 - Reminiscent of Isaiah 40-60
 - Compare Isaiah 40:1-11
 - The return from the Exile; the restoration of Israel; spoken as words of hope while the people are still in bondage; hope of a better future
 - God lavishes honor and glory upon the people who have suffered so much
 - This reading prepares us for the Gospel

3. The Responsorial Psalm 126

- A psalm of ascent that recalls the Exodus event when God brought the People of Israel out of slavery into the Promised Land. Liberation/ Freedom
- The promise of the restoration of Israel through the anticipation of a Messiah was the reincarnation of the hope of restoration after the Exile. The hope for restoration was not fulfilled. So, the people waited for the promise to be fulfilled in another way. "Those who sow in tears will reap with joy." Perseverance, vigilance, steadfastness.

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

The Philippians

A letter of Paul written from prison (probably in Ephesus) to the community in Philippi, a Roman city in Macedonia, northeastern Greece. ~~The Philippians~~ have been very generous and supportive of Paul and he is filled with affection and thanksgiving for them.

Most famous part of Philippians is the hymn found in 2: 6-11; Jesus does not cling to his divine status but empties himself out for us. Because he empties himself out, God raised him up and made exalted him. Jesus is the model of humility for the Christian community. We are to empty ourselves out for each other. Then, God will raise us up.

4-6: Even though he is in prison, Paul is filled with thanksgiving for the spread of the Gospel and for their concern for him. This is "their partnership for the Gospel." Paul believes that God "who began the good work in them will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Living in the hope of the Lord's return when he will judge the world.

8-11: Paul's love for the Philippians is united with the love of Christ for them. Paul prays that their love for one another will grow.

In knowledge and every kind of perception

To discern what is of value

So you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ

Filled with the fruit of righteousness

That comes through Christ Jesus

For the glory and praise of God.

5. Gospel: Luke 3: 1-6

1-2 The entry of God into history in a new way in a particular place and time. The mystery of the Incarnation, God enters into human like as one like us in all things but sin. The particular moment in history is referenced by the political and civil leaders as well as religious. God enters into all aspects of life both secular and sacred.

2 The Word of God came to John son of Zachariah in the desert

Word of God- a traditional expression of a prophet's call. John is associated with the long line of prophets of the Old Testament

Came to a particular person with a unique history (Son of Zachariah).

In the desert: Reminds is of the Israel in the desert where God tested and tried them. Desert is a place of testing that leads to spiritual growth and maturity.

The desert is the opposite of the city. The city is man-made and operated under man made rules of operation-political, economic, social, and religious. The desert is a natural landscape, untouched, open, governed by the laws of nature. In the desert one has to respect nature (Creation).

Desert is a place apart where one can speak with God with our distraction. A place of retreat and spiritual growth. One leaves the care and anxieties of the world behind and enters into an uninterrupted space with God.

3. He went throughout the whole region of the Jordan proclaiming
Prefigured the style of Evangelization of Jesus— on foot, person to person, proclamation, “apostolic” -sent out

A baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins-
Baptism- a purification rite, rested to Jewish washing rites, symbolic of a desire for repentance, wash clean from sin, different from Jesus’ baptism which was forgiveness related to his death and resurrection, which actually effected the forgiveness, healing, and participation in the life of grace- the divine life.

John calls the people to a desire for repentance and change in preparation for the coming of the Messiah

John’s ministry is pointing to the fulfillment of Isaiah that will happen in Jesus. The hope that was unrealized after the Exile will now be realized in Jesus. John prepares the people for this great event about to happen—this in breaking of a God into human history.

4-5 Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice of one crying out:

In the desert prepare the way of the Lord