

Second Sunday in Advent December 4, 2016

LUTHERAN

## LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.  
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the  
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

November 24, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship midweek service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, a newly formed assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.*

*E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.*



<http://www.integrity-authenticity-love.com/devotional-thoughts-matthew-31-17/>

### Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 344 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 63

“ On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry”

“Scripture References: stanza - 1-2 = Isa. 40:3, 9, Matt. 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:3-4  
st. 3, Ps. 46:1, Isa. 40:7

John the Baptist's announcement "Prepare the way for the Lord" (Matt. 3:3, a quote from Isa. 40:3) is the primary basis for this Advent hymn. Stanzas 1 and 2 apply that message to people today; stanza 3 is a confession by God's people of their need for salvation; stanza 4 is a prayer for healing and love; stanza 5 is a doxology. This much-loved Advent text is laced with various scriptural phrases.” [http://www.hymnary.org/text/on\\_jordans\\_bank\\_the\\_baptists\\_cry](http://www.hymnary.org/text/on_jordans_bank_the_baptists_cry)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2\\_30G2fJmU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2_30G2fJmU) Solo male voice with words and pictures  
[J Haselbarth](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBzo7yNZ5vg> Pipe organ with a good opportunity to watch the  
foot pedals [Pousane16's channel](#)

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**Isaiah 11:1-10; RCL (Revised Common Lectionary) RCL, the same reading (Next Week, Isaiah 35:1-10; RCL, the same reading) The first reading will be from Isaiah through January 22.**

## **The Righteous Reign of the Branch**

11 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,  
<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;  
and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup>They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup>In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

### ***“Let the Grinch Steal Christmas!”***

“Do you recognize **this character**? In case any of you aren't familiar with *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, the Grinch hated the *who's*. He hated it even more that the *who's* loved Christmas. So, the Grinch came up with a plan to keep Christmas from coming to *Whosville*. He stole all the *who's* Christmas food, decorations and presents. But Christmas came anyway, and the *who's* were happy even without all their Christmas things. This warmed the Grinch's heart. He returned the *who's* things and then they all enjoyed Christmas together. Why is this story so popular? Why do we see elements of this plot in almost every holiday movie? Deep down everyone knows that happiness is not in things, it's in being nice to others; and many hope that holiday traditions will bring that out in people at least for awhile.

Does it really work that way? What if a **real life Grinch** made it so you couldn't buy any presents for your family? Or what if this **Grinch kept you** and yours from going to any parties? Or what if **this great big Grinch** made it illegal for anyone to ever say “Merry Christmas”? If all our Christmas traditions were taken from us, what would be left? Well, let the Grinch steal Christmas, because we would still have Jesus, and Jesus is all we need. **1. No one can stop Him from giving us His presents. 2. His presents are the best...”**

<http://www.newhopelutheran.net/Grinch.php> *A sermon preached at New Hope Lutheran Church, West Melbourne, FL on December 5, 2010 by Pastor Dale Raether (WELS)*

### **Psalm 72:1-7; RCL, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 (Psalm 146; RCL, Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55)**

“Psalm 72 is an expansive, generic enthronement hymn that was likely a staple of coronations in ancient Israel/Judah.

In the verses omitted by the lectionary, there are mentions of Tarshish, Seba, and Sheba (the latter, perhaps giving rise to the epigraph, “Of Solomon”), but for the most part the psalm - - certainly as it will be heard in Christian worship today -- floats free of specific historical context...” (commentary continues after reading)

## Give the King Your Justice

### *Of Solomon.*

- 72 Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the royal son!
- <sup>2</sup> **May he** judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice!
- <sup>3</sup> Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness!
- <sup>4</sup> **May he** defend the cause of the poor of the people,  
give deliverance to the children of the needy,  
and crush the oppressor!
- <sup>5</sup> May they fear you<sup>[a]</sup> while the sun endures,  
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!
- <sup>6</sup> **May he** be like rain that falls on the mown grass,  
like showers that water the earth!
- <sup>7</sup> In his days may the righteous flourish,  
and peace abound, till the moon be no more!...

<sup>18</sup> *Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,  
who alone does wondrous things.*

<sup>19</sup> *Blessed be his glorious name forever;  
may the whole earth be filled with his glory!  
Amen and Amen!...*

- a. [Psalm 72:5](#) Septuagint *He shall endure*
- b. [Psalm 72:8](#) That is, the Euphrates

“... the psalm serves a purpose similar to that of the “charges” that are part of our baptism, confirmation, or commissioning liturgies where the community rehearses what it believes are God’s mission priorities for the life and ministry of the person being set apart.

Verse 1 sets the tone and contains the only petitions voiced to God in the imperative (with emphasis added through the parallel structure): “Give the king your justice ... [and] the king’s son your righteousness.” Saving justice is a trademark of God’s reign and must be embodied by God’s agent in the world.

The rest of the psalm is organized around a long series of petitions that begin with, “**May he** ...” The psalm asks that God grant the king -- and the people, *through the king’s reign* - - righteousness, justice, prosperity, protection (from oppressors), a name that endures, shalom (well-being), political dominion (through which all the world is blessed), and -- as a spontaneous response to these missional priorities -- the tribute and admiration of the nations.

The petitions *could be* in order of priority, but the effect of the psalm when read aloud is of an intensifying spiraling and overlapping of attributes. Verses 18 and 19 seem to have been added

to the main body of the psalm; they are a benediction to God, a doxology that closes out Book II of Psalms.

Psalm 72 responds to the first lesson by echoing and supplementing Isaiah's prophecy about the righteous messianic shoot from Jesse's stump. The emphases are slightly different, but the gist is the same. The gospel reading then, might be read as a reality-checking foil to all that extolling. John the Baptist knows that justice and righteousness do not appear by magic or without cost; they involve winnowing, purifying, and comeuppance!

A key to preaching this psalm is identifying the entity in our world to which the word "king" should refer. We continue to pray for these attributes for the making of justice, righteousness, and peace; but who is, was, or will be the appropriate recipient: the historic rulers of Judah, Jesus, the church itself, or even contemporary rulers and governments? And then, by extension, the sermon should declare on whom the benefits of that righteous reign fall...

In the psalm's historical context, the monarch enjoys a divinely ordained blood lineage. In our context, heroic assets and the "right to rule" are attained by or projected onto leaders in more secular ways. But still, today's hearers can identify with the ancient *singers* of this psalm whose hopes for justice soar at the installation of each new leader, even as they lament the ways those same hopes were dashed or unfilled by the old one.

Is Jesus the "king" of Psalm 72? I respect those preachers who resist looking for Jesus under every rock in Hebrew Scripture, but on the second Sunday of Advent when this psalm is read on the heels of Isaiah 11, most hearers in worship will understand "king" to refer to Jesus (thus tracking with New Testament writers and the bulk of the church's history of interpretation!)

When I'm sitting in the pew on Advent 2, I'd like to hear a preacher wrestle with how to stretch this psalm (and even Isaiah's vision) so that it becomes either a recollection for the church of its mission statement or a challenge to call our secular governments to faithfulness to a mission they might not even know they are a part of. Or both.

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1907](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1907) Henry Langknecht Associate Professor of Homiletics, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH

**Intrigued by what was left out? Read the entire Psalm in your Bible.**

**Romans 15:4-13; RCL, the same reading (*James 5:7-11; RCL, verses 7-10*)**

*"The vision of the coming Kingdom is broad, wide, deep, and generous.*

*On this Second Sunday of Advent, the text from Romans encourages us to move deeper into the vision outlined on the First Sunday. The unexpected return, the unexpected advent of the neighbor, is not something that should throw a wrench into our daily routine but is something to be joyfully welcomed as part of the baptismal journey we have engaged... (continued after reading)*

<sup>4</sup> For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. <sup>5</sup> May the God of

endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

## Christ the Hope of Jews and Gentiles

<sup>8</sup>For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,<sup>9</sup> and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,  
and sing to your name.”

<sup>10</sup>And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

<sup>11</sup>And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,  
and let all the peoples extol him.”

<sup>12</sup>And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,  
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;  
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

<sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

“...We have here a version of Luther's happy exchange: Christ takes upon himself everything that separates us from God and in return gives us all Christ's benefits. This exchange is continually happening, this exchange is event, is truth in our lives, as we welcome the neighbor and as we are welcomed, as we live in harmony with one another in accordance with Jesus Christ. And because this is a liberating, hopefully and happy exchange, we sing praises to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and all people witness God's glory.”

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=787](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=787)

[Dirk G. Lange](#)

Associate Dean; Fredrik A. Schiotez Chair of Missions and Professor of Worship, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Read a sermon by Luther on this reading at

[http://www.trinitylutheranms.org/MartinLuther/MLSermons/Romans15\\_4\\_13.html](http://www.trinitylutheranms.org/MartinLuther/MLSermons/Romans15_4_13.html)



## “The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 3rd Chapter”

### “Glory to You, O Lord”

**Matthew 3:1-12; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 11:2-15; RCL, verses 2-11)**

#### **John the Baptist Prepares the Way**

<sup>3</sup> In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,  
<sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare<sup>[b]</sup> the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’”\*

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

- a. [Matthew 3:2](#) Or *the kingdom of heaven has come near*
- b. [Matthew 3:3](#) Or *crying: Prepare in the wilderness*

“This is the Gospel of the Lord”      “Praise to You, O Christ”

\*Enjoy - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSIs1MHdFOY>

“For four hundred years since the close of the Old Testament, no prophetic voice had been raised in Israel. To be sure, God had spoken by angels to Zacharias and Elizabeth, to Joseph and Mary, and to the Magi, but no human voice had spoken for God, except that of the

child Jesus in the temple (Lk 2:41-50). Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea (cf. Mk 1:1-8; Lk 3:1-20). Clothed in a long garment made of rough camel hair, bound with a leather belt, and eating locusts and wild honey, John's garb was appropriate to his office and was similar to that of Elijah (2 Ki 1:8) and which, apparently, was the customary dress for prophets, even those who were false prophets (Zee 13:4). As Tasker points out, Matthew assumes that his readers are familiar with John the Baptist and does not give his background as Luke does (Lk 1:5-25, 57-80).<sup>16</sup>

The message of John was like that of Elijah, as he heralded his exhortation to Pharisees as well as Sadducees and to all who came: "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His role was that of a herald coming before the king. Matthew finds John fulfilling the prediction of Isaiah 40:3-5, that there would be a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way before the Lord. Like the servants of a king who would smooth out and straighten the road in preparation for their sovereign's coming, so John was preparing the way spiritually for the coming of Christ...

...The ministry of John the Baptist signaled a spiritual crisis in Israel. Would they accept their King, or would they reject Him? The ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way by calling Israel to repentance.

The phenomenal success of John's ministry is evident in the thousands that came out to see him. Estimating that between 200,000 and 500,000 must have responded to his call for repentance and baptism,<sup>17</sup> Lenski, in keeping with his Lutheran concept of baptism, argues that the very numbers of those who repented make impossible baptism by immersion of all of them.<sup>18</sup> He interprets baptism as referring to Jewish rites of washing rather than immersion. The number of those baptized, however, is not given in Scripture, nor is it confirmed by other evidence. And this issue of immersion versus affusion depends on the definition of baptism itself, that is, whether it is used in its primary sense of immersion or submersion, or in its secondary sense of placing in or initiation.

The more important question than the mode of baptism, however, is the meaning of the baptism of John. It is clearly not Christian baptism, as it does not signify initiation into the body of Christ; neither is it symbolic of a work of the Holy Spirit, as John himself refers to it as a work of Christ. It is rather a religious rite, signifying their confession of sins and commitment to a new holy life, such as was proper for Jews in the old dispensation..."

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