

Luke 3:1-6

As did classical Greek authors, Luke places an event (John's ministry) in the context of rulers, here both secular and religious. (V. 1a gives the most precise dating of the start of Jesus' ministry in the gospels, i.e. 26-29 AD.) "Herod" here is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. "Caiaphas" (v. 2), Annas' son, is now high priest but his father retains his prestige (and power). The Greek translated "the word of God came" (v. 2) is the same as in Jeremiah: Luke sees John as continuing Jeremiah's role of announcing judgement at the end of the era and a new pact with God, available to all. John travels throughout the Jordan Valley, preaching return to God's ways and being ethically and spiritually renewed, here (vv. 4-6) expressed through metaphor. (These verses are from Isaiah 40:3-5.) Luke makes one change in the quotation: "his" (v. 4) emphasizes that it is Jesus for whom he prepares the way. To Luke, "all flesh" (v. 6), all people, not only Jews, will have the opportunity to be rescued from sin.
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The Post-Communion Prayer

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

~ Notices ~

Concerts currently scheduled for this Autumn:

Fri 10th December - **Pat Ryan and Eoin O'Neill** – A Gala of traditional Irish Music - ticket details to be confirmed.

11th December 8.00pm – **Helen Hancock** – (soprano with Frances Kelleher – pianist and Cilleán Fox – violin) – tickets €15 available from www.eventbrite.ie

11th/12th December – 2-4.p.m – **Clare Music Makers** – students concert – donations for MidWest Simon Foodbank

Prayers - If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

Talks at Killaloe Cathedral – A series of talks for Advent Wednesday at 8.00pm – Cathedral Church of St Flannan. Also streamed from their website and Facebook.

Week 3 8th December – an Episcopal church
Ven Terry Mitchell

Week 4 15th December – An ecumenical church
Joc Sanders

Website: clareanglicans.ie

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans

Facebook: www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

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Advent Wreath prayer: Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, just and true, to you be praise and glory for ever! Of old you spoke by the mouth of your prophets but in our days you speak through your Son whom you have appointed the heir of all things. Grant us your people to walk in his light that we may be found ready and watching when he comes again in glory and judgement; for you are our light and our salvation. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Mission Sunday donations to:

Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Council for Mission
IBAN: IE44OF19045591214337 BIC: BOFIE2D



2nd Sunday of Advent (Year C) 2021

Readings and Hymns

Collect: Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns: *In conjunction with the online service you might like to view these hymns on YouTube - with internet links and lyrics so that you can sing along:*

- 1) Hark! a thrilling voice in sounding
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCrEt11-SFU>
- 2) Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkTrFQLy6js>
- 3) On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plr21LgFpg>
- 4) Christ, whose glory fills the skies
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvni-t_71-k

Baruch 5. 1-9

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven.

For God will give you evermore the name, 'Righteous Peace, Godly Glory'.

Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look towards the east,

and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One,

rejoicing that God has remembered them.

For they went out from you on foot,

led away by their enemies;

but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low

and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,

so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.

The woods and every fragrant tree

have shaded Israel at God's command.

For God will lead Israel with joy,

in the light of his glory,

with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

Luke 1.68-79

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty saviour for us

in the house of his servant David,

as he spoke through the mouth

of his holy prophets from of old,

that we would be saved from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our

ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant,

the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,

to grant us that we,

being rescued from the hands of our enemies,

might serve him without fear, in holiness and

righteousness before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet
of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.’
Glory to the Father.....

Philippians 1: 3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God’s grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Luke 3: 1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”’

Commentary

Baruch 5:1-9

This book is set in the time of the Exile, when some Jews had been deported to Babylon and others had dispersed around the Mediterranean. The author has stated that the Exile happened because many Jews did not obey the Law of Moses (4:12): the speaker there is Jerusalem, the personified mother of the nation. She is a prophet of events to come. God, she says, has noted the people’s return to obedience to him, so the time of the return home is imminent. The time of the city’s mourning for the loss of her “children” (4:12, v. 5) is nearing its end.

Now the author speaks to Jerusalem. It is time to remove mourning attire, to don forever splendid garments given by God, guarantees and symbols of harmony, security and prosperity. Exodus tells us that Aaron, as priest, wore a “diadem” (v. 2, or mitre) inscribed “Holy to the LORD”, a symbol of divine regal splendour.

Now personified Jerusalem is made a priest of God (“of the Everlasting”), succeeding Aaron, as a sign of God’s power.

The city will receive two titles forever: “Righteous Peace, Godly Glory” (v. 4). From now on, Jerusalem will be a place where justice and peace prevail and where God’s glory will be seen. Vv. 5ff tell of a procession, a pilgrimage to the holy city. The exiles will return from “the east” (Babylon), and from elsewhere, God having spoken (“the word”) and remembered them. They departed the city “on foot” (v. 6) but will return regally, as if borne on thrones. V. 7 echoes Isaiah 40:3-4: a road will be levelled through the Arabian Desert, so they can return safely. It will be surrounded with trees (“woods”, v. 8) which will have miraculously grown in the desert “at God’s command”. God will be present with them (“in the light of his glory”, v. 9), as will “mercy and righteousness”, attributes of God.

Luke 1:68-79

Zechariah has been struck mute upon hearing that his wife Elizabeth will bear a child in old age. Later, she has given birth to a son, and his parents have brought him to be circumcised and named. Elizabeth has favoured the name John, and Zechariah has agreed. Now Zechariah “filled with the Holy Spirit ... spoke this prophecy” (v. 67), known as the Benedictus – the Latin translation of “Blessed” (v. 68).

Vv. 68-69 tell of the blessing Israel’s God brings to “his people”: the Jews are the elect. (While the verbs in translations are in the past tense, the present is equally appropriate. The tense in Greek shows that they describe how God characteristically acts and what he is inaugurating in Jesus.) God gives them one who will save them from sin (“mighty saviour”, v. 69), descended from David, in fulfilment of prophecies he made through the Old Testament “prophets” (v. 70) who told of rescue from “enemies” (v. 71). God fulfils his promises, especially his pact with Abraham (vv. 72-73), so Israel may from now on hold him in proper respect but not fear his wrath. The “child” (v. 76) is John the Baptist. He will be thought to be Elijah, “the prophet ...” (although Luke sees the prophet long expected as Jesus). John’s mission will be to bring people to an ethical, godly, way of living, thus preparing the way for “the Lord”. Vv. 78-79 return to Jesus’ role: he will be the “dawn” (new light) from heaven, the one through whom God fulfils his purpose for humanity. At a time when hopes are at low ebb and people are particularly in need, he will be a beacon guiding them into “peace” (v. 79), i.e. wholeness, harmony, well-being, prosperity and security.

Philippians 1:3-11

In the verses following the salutation of the letter, Paul thanks God for the Christians at Philippi, “praying with joy” (v. 4, a pervasive quality of the book), because of their participation (“sharing”, v. 5) in spreading the good news, “from the first day”, since their conversion. Paul is “confident” (v. 6) that God (“the one”) will finish what God has begun among them by “the day of Jesus Christ”, i.e. when he returns at the end of the era. Paul is particularly close to the Philippians because they “share” (v. 7) in Christian community, “in God’s grace”, with him: in suffering, and in defending and confirming the good news. (At his trial, Paul will have the opportunity to defend the gospel and show its power, v. 16). He longs to be with them with deep affection (“compassion”, v. 8). Vv. 9-11 are his prayer for them: may they grow in love of God through knowing more of the Christian reality, marked by keen awareness of its meaning (“insight”), that they may discern the difference being Christians makes (“best”), so that when Christ comes again, they may be ready – having achieved a right relationship with God (“harvest of righteousness”, v. 11), through being in and with Christ, thus augmenting God’s “glory”, the showing forth of his inherent absolute goodness, and being ideally suited to praising God, rendering him homage, for it.