

Paul's quotations in vv. 9-12 – from Psalms, Deuteronomy and Isaiah – all show that others besides Jews were envisioned in God's plan. Paul ends by asking God, the one in whom all cultures centre their "hope" (v. 13), to fill his readers with "joy", "peace" and "hope" – the key concepts in his quotations.

### Matthew 3:1-12

Matthew has told us of Jesus' descent from King David, his birth and infancy, and the coming of the wise men. Now he leaps forward to about 26 AD. John appears in the "wilderness", the arid region south and east of Jerusalem, an area where only hermits lived. His call to repentance, to turning back to the way of life to which Israel committed herself in its covenant with God, is like that of Old Testament prophets. His message about the nearness of God's kingdom, of the time of complete fulfilment of God's promises for humans, is a central message of Jesus. A new era, in which God rules, is almost here! Originally applied to the exiles returning from Babylon, Isaiah's words in v. 3 also fit John. He is dressed like a hermit ("camel's hair", v. 4) and he eats off the arid land ("locusts", "wild honey"), as did Elijah. People came to him from both sides of the Jordan (v. 5) and were baptised by him with water, in recognition of, and confession of, sin – with complete acceptance of God's judgement and forgiveness. "Vipers" (v. 7) are poisonous snakes, a danger in the wilderness. John doubts the sincerity of "Pharisees and Sadducees", thinking they are trying to avoid God's adverse judgement ("wrath"); he challenges them to show their return to God in their lives (v. 8). He warns that being ethnically Jewish, a member of God's people, is no guarantee of entry to the Kingdom; God shows no partiality (v. 9); he can have other "children". Those who do not show in their lives that they have returned to God will be destroyed (v. 10). In v. 11, John foretells Jesus's mission: giving people power to reshape the world ("with the Holy Spirit") but also judging the ungodly, and purging them ("fire"). V. 12 puts this in farming terms: "wheat" was separated from "chaff" on a "threshing floor"; the wind blew away the "chaff". © 1996-2019 Chris Haslam

### ~ Notices ~

**Ukraine Appeal** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie) or: [www.christianaid.ie](http://www.christianaid.ie)

**Living the Questions Course** –Weds @ 7.00pm Rectory

**Book Club** 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month – ask Sue for details

### Concerts booked

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December** 1.00pm

Piano Concert Clare Music Makers

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December** 7.00pm

Cooler Music School Harmony Choir - Ste Lucia Concert.

### Christmas Services

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Christingle – Kilfenora Cathedral

8.00pm Eucharist – Kilnasoolagh Church

Christmas Day 9.30am Spanish Point

11.30am St Columba's, Ennis

**Website:** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans](http://www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans](http://www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans)

**Rector:** Email: [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com)

**Tel:** 065 672 4721

*New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org> The Common Worship psalter is © The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, 2000.*

### Mission Sunday

Donations for Protestant Aid and St Vincent de Paul to:

Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Council for Mission

Bank of Ireland, University Branch, Castletroy, Limerick

IBAN: IE44BOFI90459591214337 BIC: BOFIE2D



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent 2022 (A)

### Readings and Hymns

#### Collect

Faithful God, whose promises stand unshaken through all generations: renew us in hope, that we may be awake and alert watching for the glorious return of Jesus Christ, our Judge and Saviour, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

#### Hymns

**Hymn 1:** (133) Long ago, prophets knew

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S63rjDtYRYg>

**Hymn 2:** (97) Jesus shall reign where'er the sun

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcHXOnKZ3ME>

**Hymn 3:** (481) God is working his purpose out

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr3goa3DXsw>

#### Isaiah 11: 1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.  
The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand  
on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.  
On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to  
the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his  
dwelling shall be glorious.

#### Psalms 72

Give the king your judgements, O God, ♦

and your righteousness to the son of a king.

Then shall he judge your people righteously ♦

and your poor with justice.

May the mountains bring forth peace, ♦

and the little hills righteousness for the people.

May he defend the poor among the people, ♦

deliver the children of the needy and crush the  
oppressor.

May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, ♦  
from one generation to another.

May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, ♦  
like the showers that water the earth.

In his time shall righteousness flourish, ♦  
and abundance of peace  
till the moon shall be no more.  
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, ♦  
who alone does wonderful things.  
And blessed be his glorious name for ever. ♦  
May all the earth be filled with his glory. **Amen. Amen.**

#### **Romans 15: 4-13**

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written,

‘Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,  
and sing praises to your name’;

and again he says,

‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people’;

and again,

‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,

and let all the peoples praise him’;

and again Isaiah says,

‘The root of Jesse shall come,

the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;

in him the Gentiles shall hope.’

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

#### **Matthew 3: 1-12**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.”’

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our ancestor”; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ‘I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

#### **Post Communion Prayer**

God our deliverer, awaken our hearts to prepare the way for the advent of your Son, that, with minds purified by the grace of his coming, we may serve you faithfully all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

#### **Commentary**

##### **Isaiah 11:1-10**

In 745 BC, Tiglath-pileser III became king of Assyria; he was bent on conquering all of the west, including Israel. Isaiah wrote these words soon after. In the preceding verses, he has used tree imagery; he continues to do so here. “Jesse” was David’s father. A new “branch” will grow, a king descended from Jesse and David, but of a new kind. God’s “spirit” (v. 2) rested on Moses, David and other leaders, enabling them to do the seemingly impossible. Six gifts of the spirit which God will give this king are listed here (v. 2): “wisdom”, “understanding” and “counsel” will make him independent of foolish advisers; he will have “might” to defend his people, “knowledge” of God’s ways and “fear” (awe), i.e. proper respect for God. This ideal future king will both be able to understand God’s purposes for his people and have the power to bring them to effect. He will also exercise justice, thus aiding the underdog and those who hold God in awe (“the meek”, v. 4). He will use his chastening “rod” and hot lethal “breath” to destroy the ungodly. In v. 5 “belt” appears twice; both are underwear. This king will hold justice and fidelity to his people as close to him as his underwear! In vv. 6-8, the images of peace among animals speak of the restoration of the ideal state of harmony God originally intended, before humans revolted against him. (The “asp”, v. 8, and the “adder” are poisonous snakes.) Harmony will also be restored between animals and humans. No one in the whole of (“all”) God’s domain (not just Jerusalem, “my holy mountain”, v. 9) will be in danger, because all will know God, i.e. observe his will, as surely as “the waters cover the sea”. This king (“root of Jesse”, v. 10) will be a rallying point not just for Judah but for all peoples: they will see his achievements and “inquire” of God’s glory as reflected in him.

##### **Psalms 72:1-7,18-19**

This is a prayer for God’s blessing on a king – perhaps used at his coronation or at an annual liturgy on its anniversary. It either confirms the king as legitimate and not a usurper (“king’s son”) or it seeks that his dynasty may continue. May he be a guarantor of justice (have the ability to determine what is right) especially for the helpless “poor” (vv. 2, 4) and “crush” those who harm them; may his reign be marked with “prosperity” (v. 3). Ancient people saw the king as almost divine (v. 5) and the health, fertility, right living and peace of the nation as bound up with those of the monarch. (“Rain”, v. 6, and “showers” led to abundant produce.) May his empire be universal, with other kings “fall[ing] down [to worship] before him” (v. 11). This king is the champion of the underdog (vv. 11-12). May his dynasty “endure forever” (v. 17) – thus ensuring political stability.

##### **Romans 15:4-13**

Paul has told his readers that “We who are strong” (v. 1) are to help the “weak” to come to terms with their consciences; we are to endure, pleasantly, their “failings” – thus building up the Christian community. Jesus is our great example. Now Paul tells us the value of the Old Testament for us, “written in former days” (v. 4). When Jesus’ suffering is seen as part of God’s plan (which began with Abraham and other patriarchs) “the scriptures” take on a greater meaning: towards the “hope” of eternal life. Vv. 5-6 are a prayer for harmony in the community, so that it may reflect God’s glory. In 14:1, Paul has written: “Welcome those who are weak in faith”. In v. 7 he combines this with Jesus’ command to “love one another as I have loved you”. Why? “For the glory of God”, the reason Jesus came to us. Jesus was a Jew and ministered to Jews (“a servant of the circumcised”, v. 8) in order to demonstrate that the “promises ... to the patriarchs” are reliable (“confirm”) and to open up God’s promises to other cultural communities (“Gentiles”, v. 9, Greek: *ethne*).