
Narrative Lectionary

Year 3 | The Year of Luke

Scripture Readings December 13, 2020

*The Third Sunday
of Advent*

About the text

AMONG THE RUINS WHERE is hope to be found? Is it ever appropriate to tell the dazed and broken survivors, “Things are bad, but they will get better for you”?

Isaiah, on his own, surely would not have dared. The bedraggled remnant of Israel’s glory, grieving what they had lost and overwhelmed by their bleak situation, would have looked askance at him. How might this strange man deliver more than empty consolation?

Isaiah was not on his own. He was a designated messenger of God’s word. The word was one of restoration: for the impoverished, the grieving, the captive. They were in the midst of Hell on earth. Isaiah alone could not make it better.

But the One who spoke through Isaiah could, and would.



Isaiah 61:1-11

1 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; · he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, · to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; · ² to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; · ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, · the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. · They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

4 They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; · they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

5 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines;

6 but you shall be called priests of the LORD, you shall be named ministers of our God; · you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory.

7 Because their shame was double, and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot, · therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

8 For I the LORD love justice, I hate

1 The Spirit of GOD, the Master, is on me because GOD anointed me. · He sent me to preach good news to the poor, heal the heartbroken, · Announce freedom to all captives, pardon all prisoners.

2 GOD sent me to announce the year of his grace—a celebration of God's destruction of our enemies—and to comfort all who mourn,

3 To care for the needs of all who mourn in Zion, give them bouquets of roses instead of ashes, · Messages of joy instead of news of doom, a praising heart instead of a languid spirit. · Rename them "Oaks of Righteousness" planted by GOD to display his glory.

4 They'll rebuild the old ruins, raise a new city out of the wreckage. · They'll start over on the ruined cities, take the rubble left behind and make it new.

5 You'll hire outsiders to herd your flocks and foreigners to work your fields,

6 But you'll have the title "Priests of GOD," honored as ministers of our God. · You'll feast on the bounty of nations, you'll bask in their glory.

7 Because you got a double dose of trouble and more than your share of contempt, · Your inheritance in the land will be doubled and your joy go on forever.

8 "Because I, GOD, love fair dealing and hate thievery and crime, · I'll pay

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robbery and wrongdoing; · I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

9 Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; · all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; · for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, · as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, · so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The Message

your wages on time and in full, and establish my eternal covenant with you.

9 Your descendants will become well-known all over. Your children in foreign countries · Will be recognized at once as the people I have blessed.”

10 I will sing for joy in GOD, explode in praise from deep in my soul! · He dressed me up in a suit of salvation, he outfitted me in a robe of righteousness, · As a bridegroom who puts on a tuxedo and a bride a jeweled tiara.

11 For as the earth bursts with spring wildflowers, and as a garden cascades with blossoms, · So the Master, GOD, brings righteousness into full bloom and puts praise on display before the nations.

Luke 4:16-21

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. · He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and

16 He came to Nazareth where he had been reared. As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place. When he stood up to read, ¹⁷ he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written,

18 God’s Spirit is on me; he’s chosen me to preach the Message of good news to the poor, · Sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to

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recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

The Message

the blind, · To set the burdened and battered free, ¹⁹ to announce, "This is God's year to act!"

20 He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the place was on him, intent. ²¹ Then he started in, "You've just heard Scripture make history. It came true just now in this place."

The Narrative Lectionary presents the story of God's work in humanity through a single Gospel each year. This is Year 3: The Year of Luke.