



DAILY BREAD  
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS  
ADVENT 3 —YEAR A

**INVOCATION**

L: In the name of the Father  
and of the Son +  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**G: Amen**

**PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 146**

**A: I will praise your name forever,  
my King and my God.**

L: Praise the LORD, O my soul.

**G: I will sing praise to my God as long as I  
live.**

L: Do not put your trust in princes,

**G: in mortal men, who cannot save.**

L: Blessed is he whose hope is in the LORD his God,

**G: the maker of heaven and earth.**

L: The LORD gives food to the hungry,

**G: the LORD sets prisoners free.**

L: The LORD gives sight to the blind,

**G: the LORD lifts up those who are bowed  
down.**

L: The LORD watches over the outcast

**G: and sustains the fatherless and the widow.**

L: The LORD remains faithful forever.

**G: He upholds the cause of the oppressed.**

**A: I will praise your name forever,  
my King and my God.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

L: Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**READING & MEDITATION** *see next page*

**PRAYER**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**VERSE OF THE DAY**

**A: I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.  
(Matthew 11:10 cf. NIV)**

**BENEDICTION**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**A: Amen**

## READING AND MEDITATION:

**Third Sunday in Advent:** In the Messiah's kingdom things are not always what they seem. Appearances can be deceiving and lead to doubt. In the Prayer of the Day the Church asks Christ to drive the darkness of doubt from our hearts and fill us with the light of the knowledge of Christ. Faith in Christ leads us to patiently hope in the Lord's caring plan despite any appearances to the contrary.

**As you study this week, seek to find the connecting theme in all the lessons by using Luther's Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:**

1. *What is God saying to me in this lesson?*
2. *For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?*
3. *What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?*
4. *For what does this lesson lead me to pray?*

## THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 11:2-11

Things were not what they seemed. John languished in prison for preaching righteousness. When he saw the works of Jesus (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ) questions rose in his mind and doubt filled the hearts of his followers. John knew that Jesus was the Christ, but where were the acts of judgment promised? Why did John look like a failure and the wicked look like they were winning? John sends his disciples to the right place, to Jesus. When we take our doubts and questions to Jesus, he drives the darkness from our hearts and fills us with light. Jesus pointed to his works as signs from God fulfilling the words of the prophet and marking him as the Coming One. Jesus was far more than he appeared to be: he was the Messiah who makes the blind see, the dead live and the poor evangelized. Jesus then points to John and shows greatness hiding behind the cross and persecution. Though John did not seem it, he was the second Elijah and a prophet without peer.

*My takeaways:*

## FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 35:1-10

The coming of the Messiah would change everything. A world destroyed by sin is filled with sorrow and sighing. But things are not always what they seem: A desert is a latent pool; thirsty ground is a future streambed; the blind are future seers, and the lame future leapers. Our certain knowledge that the earth is the Lord's and that he controls everything in it gives us patience and courage to wait for God to make what we see match what we know.

Be strong, do not fear; your God will come. His promise to come strengthens feeble hands and fearful hearts. He will come with vengeance and retribution to redress the wrong and with redemption and rejoicing for God's people. Jesus fulfilled these words of prophecy in his acts of ministry so that God's people could see how near God's kingdom had come!

*My takeaways:*

## SECOND LESSON: JAMES 5:7-11

Knowing what we do about Christ's coming kingdom, we want it now. God's encouragement, however, is for us to be patient. A farmer's fields may look fallow or dead, but things are not always what they seem. The seed waits inside the earth for the rains and then bursts forth to life. When Christians face persecution or suffering, life can seem like a fallow field. While we wait for the rain, we struggle with questions and doubts. James reminds us that the fallow parts of our lives are simply waiting for God's timing to bring forth fruit in our lives. The Christian patiently waits for the Lord's coming, when what we see will finally match what we know.

*My takeaways:*

## SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: JOB 1:6-22

In the second lesson, James points to Job as an example of perseverance in the face of suffering and God's resulting blessing. To Satan it appeared that Job served God because he was blessed. That was not so. After great suffering and tremendous loss, it appeared to everyone else that Job had absolutely no reason to praise God. That was not so either. Job knew that for the children of God, things are not always what they seem. He had the patience to wait for the rain—to wait for God to make fruitful again the fallow parts of his life.

*My takeaways:*

***What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?***