

The First Lesson: Baruch 5:1-9

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,
and put on forever 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 splendor everywhere under heaven.
For God will give you evermore the name,
"Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."
Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height;
look toward 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.

The Epistle: 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 defense 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 in 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.

The Gospel: Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pon-
tius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Gali-
lee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Tra-
chonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priest-
hood 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 forgive-
ness 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.'"