

Sentence of Scripture

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;
repent, and believe in the good news.

Mark 1:15

Prayer of the day

God of all peoples,
whose servant John came baptising
and calling for repentance:
help us to hear his voice of judgement,
that we may also rejoice in his word of promise,
and be found pure and blameless in that glorious Day
when Christ comes to rule the earth as Prince of Peace;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 11:1–10

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The 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. ³His 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; ⁴but 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. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶The 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. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They 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. ¹⁰ 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. (NRSV)

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Psalms 72:1–7, 18–21

¹ Give the king your judgement, O God:

and your righteousness to the son of a king,

² That he may judge your people rightly:

and the poor of the land with equity.

³ Let the mountains be laden with peace because of his righteousness:

and the hills also with prosperity for his people.

⁴ May he give justice to the poor among the people:

and rescue the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.

⁵ May he live while the sun endures:

and while the moon gives light, throughout all generations.

⁶ May he come down like rain upon the new-mown fields:

and as showers that water the earth.

⁷ In his time shall righteousness flourish:

and abundance of peace, till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁸ Let his name live for ever:

and endure as long as the sun.

¹⁹ Let all peoples use his name in blessing:

and all nations call him blessed.

²⁰ Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel:

who alone does great wonders.

²¹ Blessed be his glorious name for ever:

and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, Amen.

Romans 15:4–13

⁴ 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. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ 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, ⁹ 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”; ¹⁰ and again he says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people”; ¹¹ and again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”; ¹² and again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.”

¹³ 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. (NRSV)

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Matthew 3:1–12

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

³ 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.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ 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? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Even now the ax 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.

¹¹ “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.

¹² 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.”

(NRSV)

This is the Gospel of our Lord, **praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**