

Gospel reflection for Advent 3.

Matthew 11.2-11

There is a surprising aspect to the Gospel today. John knows who Jesus is. In Luke's gospel we are told that their mothers are related and when the pregnant Mary visits Elizabeth the child in her womb leapt.

In Matthew 3 vv13-17 we are told John has baptised Jesus; he has witnessed the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove, with a voice from heaven saying, '*This is my Son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased*'. John has no doubt about who Jesus is then.

Yet in today's gospel John seems to doubt that Jesus is the Messiah and sends a couple of his disciples to check.

Now he is in prison his confidence in Jesus seems to have been dashed.

I wonder why that is? Perhaps John was expecting Jesus to be a great leader who would deliver Israel from the hands of the oppressor...

Phil Baker



NEXT SUNDAY 21.12.25 Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.30am in the Hall

READINGS: OT Isaiah 7: 10-16



NT Romans 1: 1-7

GOSPEL Matthew 1: 18-end

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St Thomas, Exeter

14th December 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

10.30am in the Hall

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

193 Hail to the Lord's anointed

53 Be still, for the presence of the Lord

196 Hark! A herald voice is calling

321 Love divine, all loves excelling

4pm & 6pm Carol services with Grace Church

Tuesday 16th December

7.30pm House Group at Helen's house.

Wednesday 17th December

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 18th December

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots Christmas Party

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny Tuckett's house

Friday 19th December

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 20th December

4pm Blue Christmas Service



Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Isaiah 35: 1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

James 5: 7-10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11: 2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.' As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Post Communion

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights

before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen**

Notices

The House Group Advent Course The last meeting is this Tuesday, 16th December. We start again on Tuesday 6th January, weekly, until 27th January. See Ian for details.

As we increase our service offerings this Christmas, do please pray for all that is going on and come along to the extra Christmas services with your family and friends. We will need extra readers, welcomers and intercessors, so if this is something you would like to help with (even if you've never done it before), please speak to Sarah. We will be involved in 3 Primary School Christmas events in the coming weeks – a great opportunity to share with the children the real reason for Christmas.

Next Saturday afternoon, we will be holding a Blue Christmas service for anyone who finds Christmas a difficult time of year. It's a more reflective, quiet service, acknowledging that the family jollity promoted in the media isn't always how we feel in this season. Do think of those who you know who may benefit from this service and come and come and join us.

Advance Notice

Flyers are now available detailing our Christmas services. Please distribute them to family and friends.

Sunday 14th December 4pm & 6pm. Carol services with Grace Church.

Saturday 20th December 4pm. Blue Christmas service.

Sunday 21st December 3pm. Christingle Messier Church

Christmas Eve 4pm Family Crib Service.
11pm Midnight Mass.

Christmas Day 9.30am Family service.

