

First Reading, continued



The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down.

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

6 who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;

who keeps promises forever;

7 who gives justice to those who are oppressed,
and food to those who hunger.

The Lord sets the captive free.

8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind;
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

the Lord loves the righteous. R

9 The Lord cares for the stranger;
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.

10 The Lord shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout
all generations. **1 Hallelujah! R**

or Luke 1:46b-55; refrain, Luke 1:47 [not printed]

Gospel

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

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: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As 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? ⁸What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.'

¹¹"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."

¹⁰And 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.

Second Reading

James 5:7-10

Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, 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. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.