

1. A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him:

a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
a spirit of counsel and of strength,
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.

Not by appearance shall he judge,

nor by hearsay shall he decide,

but he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide aright for the land's afflicted.

He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.

Then the wolf shall be a quest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.

The cow and the bear shall be neighbors,
together their young shall rest;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.

The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.

There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD,
as water covers the sea.

On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations,
the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious.

The word of the LORD.

Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end,
her guilt is expiated;

indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!

Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!

Every valley shall be filled in,

every mountain and hill shall be made low;

the rough land shall be made a plain,

the rough country, a broad valley.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

and all people shall see it together;

for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Go up onto a high mountain,

Zion, herald of glad tidings;

cry out at the top of your voice,

Jerusalem, herald of good news!

Fear not to cry out

and say to the cities of Judah:

Here is your God!

Here comes with power the Lord GOD,

who rules by his strong arm;

here is his reward with him,

his recompense before him.

Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;

in his arms he gathers the lambs,

carrying them in his bosom,

and leading the ewes with care.

The word of the LORD.

3) A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

7:10-14

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying:

Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God;

let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!

But Ahaz answered,

"I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!"

Then Isaiah said:

Listen, O house of David!

Is it not enough for you to weary people,

must you also weary my God?

Therefore the LORD himself will give you this sign:

the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,

and shall name him Emmanuel.

The word of the LORD.

The angel Gabriel was sent from God

to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,

to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David,

and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming to her, he said,

"Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was greatly troubled at what was said

and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Then the angel said to her,

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,

and you shall name him Jesus.

He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,

and the Lord God will give him the throne of David, his father;

And he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,

and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel,

"How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"

And the angel said to her in reply,

"The holy Spirit will come upon you,

and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age,

and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;

for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word."

Then the angel departed from her.

The gospel of Our LORD Jesus Christ.

5) A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

1:18-23

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,

but before they lived together,

she was found with child through the holy Spirit.

Joseph her husband,

since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame,

decided to divorce her quietly.

Such was his intention when, behold,

the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

"Joseph, son of David,

do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.

For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.

She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,

because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son,

and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."

The gospel of Our LORD Jesus Christ.

6) A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

1:1-15

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ (the Son of God).

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

"Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way.

A voice of one crying out in the desert:

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'"

John (the) Baptist appeared in the desert

proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem

were going out to him, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River
as they acknowledged their sins.

John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist.

He fed on locusts and wild honey.

And this is what he proclaimed:

"One mightier than I is coming after me.

I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.

I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit."

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee
and was baptized in the Jordan by John.

On coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open
and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him.

And a voice came from the heavens,

"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

At once the Spirit drove him out into the desert,

and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan.

He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:

"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe in the gospel."

The gospel of Our LORD Jesus Christ.