

Isaiah 35.1-10 (NRSV)

35 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it 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.

³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say 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.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf
unstopped;

⁶then 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;

⁷the 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.

⁸A 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 traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No 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.

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.

James 5:7-11 (NRSV)

⁷Be 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. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, 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, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Matthew 11:2-11 (NRSV)

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the 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. 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 before you.'

¹¹Truly 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.