

# Preparing the Way

## New Living Translation

The Messiah as a “Good Shepherd.”

Ezekiel 34

Shepherds and Sheep

1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? 3 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. 4 You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. 6 My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

7 "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD : 8 As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock,

9 therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD : 10 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

11 " 'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.** 12 **As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.** 13 **I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.** 14 **I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.** 15 **I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD.** 16 **I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.**

**17 " 'As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. 18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? 19 Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?**

**20 " 'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, 22 I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. 23 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. 24 I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.**

**25 " 'I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. 26 I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. <sup>[a]</sup> I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. 27** The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. 28 They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in

safety, and no one will make them afraid. 29 I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations. 30 **Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. 31 You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign LORD.'** "

**Footnotes:**

- a. Ezekiel 34:26 *Or I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing*

# Preparing the Way

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<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>Fulfillment In New Testament</b>
Messiah born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1-6 Luke 2:1-20
Messiah to be a prophet like Moses	Deut. 18:15, 18-19	John 7:40
Messiah to enter Jerusalem in triumph	Zech. 9:9	Matt. 21:1-9 John 12:12-16
Messiah was to be betrayed by one of His followers	Ps. 41:9	Matt. 26: 14-16 Matt. 26:47-50 Luke 22:19-23
Messiah to be mocked and insulted	Ps. 22:7-8	Matt. 27:39-44 Luke 23: 11, 35
Messiah to die by crucifixion	Ps. 22:14, 16-17	Matt. 27:31 John 19:28-30
Messiah given vinegar and gall	Ps.69:21	Matt. 27:34 John 19:28-30
Others were to cast lots	Ps. 22:18	Matt. 27:35
Messiah's bones were not to be broken	Ex. 12:46 Numbers 9:12 Psalm 34:20	John 19:31-36
Messiah was to be raised from the dead	Ps. 16:10	Matt. 28:1-10 Acts 2:22-32
Messiah now at God's right hand	Ps. 110:1	Mark 16:19 Luke 24:50-51

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1-6 Luke 2:1-20

## Old Testament:

### Messiah Born in Bethlehem

Micah 5:2

2<sup>1</sup>But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
are only a small village among all the people of Judah.  
Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you,  
one whose origins are from the distant past.

### Visitors from the East

Matthew 2:1-6

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, 2 “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”

3 King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. 4 He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

6 ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,  
are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,  
for a ruler will come from you  
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’”

## **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

### **The Birth of Jesus**

Luke 2:1-20

1 At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2 (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5 He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

### **The Shepherds and Angels**

8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in highest heaven,  
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

16 They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. 17 After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. 18 All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, 19 but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. 20 The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah to be a prophet like Moses	Deut. 18:15, 18-19	John 7:40

### **Old Testament:**

#### **True and False Prophets**

Deut. 18:15, 18-19

15 Moses continued, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

18 I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. 19 I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf.

### **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

#### **Jesus Promises Living Water**

37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” 39 (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

#### **Division and Unbelief**

40 When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, “Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.”

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah to enter Jerusalem in triumph	Zech. 9:9 Psalm 118:25-26	Matt. 21:1-9 John 12:12-16

## Old Testament:

### Zion's Coming King

9 Rejoice, O people of Zion!<sup>[a]</sup>

Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!

Look, your king is coming to you.

He is righteous and victorious,<sup>[b]</sup>

yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—  
riding on a donkey's colt.

Footnotes:

a. Zechariah 9:9 Hebrew *O daughter of Zion!*

b. Zechariah 9:9 Hebrew *and is being vindicated.*

## **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

### **Jesus' Triumphant Entry**

Matthew 21:1-9

1 As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. 2 “Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

4 This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said,

5 “Tell the people of Israel,<sup>[a]</sup>  
‘Look, your King is coming to you.  
He is humble, riding on a donkey—  
riding on a donkey’s colt.’”<sup>[b]</sup>

6 The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.<sup>[c]</sup>

8 Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

“Praise God<sup>[d]</sup> for the Son of David!  
Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!  
Praise God in highest heaven!”<sup>[e]</sup>

Footnotes:

- a. Matthew 21:5 Greek *Tell the daughter of Zion*. Isa 62:11.
- b. Matthew 21:5 Zech 9:9.
- c. Matthew 21:7 Greek *over them, and he sat on them*.
- d. Matthew 21:9 Greek *Hosanna*, an exclamation of praise that literally means “save now”; also in 21:9b, 15.
- e. Matthew 21:9 Pss 118:25-26; 148:1.

22 The stone that the builders rejected  
has now become the cornerstone.

23 This is the LORD’s doing,  
and it is wonderful to see.

24 This is the day the LORD has made.  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Please, LORD, please save us.  
Please, LORD, please give us success.

26 Bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD.  
We bless you from the house of the LORD.

Psalm 118:22-26

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah was to be betrayed by one of His followers	Ps. 41:9	Matt. 26:14-16 Matt. 26:47-50 Luke 22:19-23

### **Old Testament:**

Psalm 41:9 Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me.

### **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

#### **Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus**

14 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests 15 and asked, “How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?” And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. 16 From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

#### **Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested**

47 And even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests and elders of the people. 48 The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: “You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss.” 49 So Judas came straight to Jesus. “Greetings, Rabbi!” he exclaimed and gave him the kiss.

50 Jesus said, “My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for.”

Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

## Luke 22:19-23

19 He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.”

20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.<sup>[a]</sup>

21 “But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. 22 For it has been determined that the Son of Man<sup>[b]</sup> must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him.”  
23 The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

### Footnotes:

- a. Luke 22:20 Some manuscripts omit 22:19b-20, *which is given for you . . . which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.*
- b. Luke 22:22 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah to be mocked and insulted	Ps. 22:7-8	Matt. 27:39-44 Luke 23: 11, 35

### **Old Testament:**

Psalm 22:7-8

7 Everyone who sees me mocks me.

They sneer and shake their heads, saying,

8 “Is this the one who relies on the LORD?

Then let the LORD save him!

If the LORD loves him so much,

let the LORD rescue him!”

### **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

Matthew 27:39-44

39 The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. 40 “Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!”

41 The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. 42 “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him! 43 He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” 44 Even the revolutionaries who were crucified with him ridiculed him in the same way.

## **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

Luke 23:11

11 Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.

Luke 23:35

35 The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah to die by crucifixion	Ps. 22:14, 16-17	Matt. 27:31 John 19:28-30

### **Old Testament:**

14 My life is poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax,  
melting within me.

16 My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs;  
an evil gang closes in on me.

They have pierced my hands and feet.

17 I can count all my bones.

My enemies stare at me and gloat.

### **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

Matthew 27:31

31 When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

### **The Death of Jesus**

28 Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. 30 When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah given vinegar and gall	Ps.69:21	Matt. 27:34 John 19:28-30

### **Old Testament:**

Psalm 69:21

21 But instead, they give me poison<sup>[a]</sup> for food; they offer me sour wine for my thirst.

Footnotes:

- a. Psalm 69:21 Or *gall*.

### **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

Matthew 27:34

34 The soldiers gave him wine mixed with bitter gall, but when he had tasted it, he refused to drink it.

### **The Death of Jesus**

John 19:28-30

28 Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.”<sup>[a]</sup> 29 A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. 30 When Jesus had tasted it, he said, “It is finished!” Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Others were to cast lots	Ps. 22:18	Matt. 27:35

### Old Testament:

Psalm 22:18

18 They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice<sup>[a]</sup> for my clothing.

Footnotes:

- a. Psalm 22:18 Hebrew *cast lots*

### Fulfillment In New Testament:

Matthew 27:35

35 After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.<sup>[a]</sup>

Footnotes:

- a. Matthew 27:35 Greek *by casting lots*. A few late manuscripts add *This fulfilled the word of the prophet: "They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my robe."* See Ps 22:18.

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah's bones were not to be broken	Ex. 12:46 Numbers 9:12 Psalm 34:20	John 19:31-36

### Old Testament:

Exodus 12:46

46 Each Passover lamb must be eaten in one house. Do not carry any of its meat outside, and do not break any of its bones.

### Fulfillment In New Testament:

John 19:31-36

31 It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. 33 But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. 34 One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. 35 (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also can believe.<sup>[a]</sup>) 36 These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken,"<sup>[b]</sup>

### Footnotes:

- a. John 19:35 Some manuscripts read *can continue to believe*.
- b. John 19:36 Exod 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20.

## **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

Numbers 9:12

12 They must not leave any of the lamb until the next morning, and they must not break any of its bones. They must follow all the normal regulations concerning the Passover.

Psalm 34:20

20 For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous;  
not one of them is broken!

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah was to be raised from the dead	Ps. 16:10	Matt. 28:1-10 Acts 2:22-32

### Old Testament:

Psalm 16:10

10 For you will not leave my soul among the dead<sup>[a]</sup>  
or allow your holy one<sup>[b]</sup> to rot in the grave.

Footnotes:

- a. Psalm 16:10 Hebrew *in Sheol*.
- b. Psalm 16:10 Or *your Holy One*.

## **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

### **The Resurrection**

Matthew 28:1-10

1 Early on Sunday morning,<sup>[a]</sup> as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

2 Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. 3 His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. 4 The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

5 Then the angel spoke to the women. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. 7 And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you.”

8 The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel’s message. 9 And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.”

Footnotes:

- a. Matthew 28:1 Greek *After the Sabbath, on the first day of the week.*

## **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

Acts 2:22-32

22 “People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene<sup>[a]</sup> by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. 23 But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. 24 But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip. 25 King David said this about him:

‘I see that the LORD is always with me.

I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

26 No wonder my heart is glad,  
and my tongue shouts his praises!  
My body rests in hope.

27 For you will not leave my soul among the dead<sup>[b]</sup>  
or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.

28 You have shown me the way of life,  
and you will fill me with the joy of your presence.’<sup>[c]</sup>

29 “Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the patriarch David wasn’t referring to himself, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us. 30 But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David’s own descendants would sit on his throne. 31 David was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah’s resurrection. He was saying that God would not leave him among the dead or allow his body to rot in the grave.

32 “God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this.

Footnotes:

- a. Acts 2:22 Or *Jesus of Nazareth*.
- b. Acts 2:27 Greek *in Hades*; also in 2:31.
- c. Acts 2:28 Ps 16:8-11 (Greek version).

Prophecy	Old Testament	Fulfillment In New Testament
Messiah now at God's right hand	Ps. 110:1	Mark 16:19 Luke 24:50-51

## **Old Testament:**

### **Psalm 110:1**

#### **A psalm of David.**

1 The LORD said to my Lord,  
 "Sit in the place of honor at my right hand  
 until I humble your enemies,  
 making them a footstool under your feet."

## **Fulfillment In New Testament:**

### Mark 16:19

19 When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand.

### Luke 24:50-51

#### **The Ascension**

50 Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven.

### Slide Show Presentation

# Lectionary

Isaiah 35: 1-10

Luke 1: 47-55

Matt. 11:2-11

James 5: 7-10

Isaiah 35:1-10

## Hope for Restoration

1 Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days.

The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses.

2 Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers  
and singing and joy!

The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon,  
as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon.

There the LORD will display his glory,  
the splendor of our God.

3 With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands,  
and encourage those who have weak knees.

4 Say to those with fearful hearts,  
“Be strong, and do not fear,  
for your God is coming to destroy your enemies.  
He is coming to save you.”

5 And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind  
and unplug the ears of the deaf.

6 The lame will leap like a deer,  
and those who cannot speak will sing for joy!  
Springs will gush forth in the wilderness,  
and streams will water the wasteland.

7 The parched ground will become a pool,  
and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land.  
Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish  
where desert jackals once lived.

- 8 And a great road will go through that once deserted land.  
It will be named the Highway of Holiness.  
Evil-minded people will never travel on it.  
It will be only for those who walk in God's ways;  
fools will never walk there.
- 9 Lions will not lurk along its course,  
nor any other ferocious beasts.  
There will be no other dangers.  
Only the redeemed will walk on it.
- 10 Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.  
They will enter Jerusalem<sup>[a]</sup> singing,  
crowned with everlasting joy.  
Sorrow and mourning will disappear,  
and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

Footnotes:

- a. Isaiah 35:10 Hebrew *Zion*.

Luke 1:47-55

### **The Magnificat: Mary's Song of Praise**

46 Mary responded,

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

47 How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

48 For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,  
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

49 For the Mighty One is holy,  
and he has done great things for me.

50 He shows mercy from generation to generation  
to all who fear him.

51 His mighty arm has done tremendous things!  
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.

52 He has brought down princes from their thrones  
and exalted the humble.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away with empty hands.

54 He has helped his servant Israel  
and remembered to be merciful.

55 For he made this promise to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his children forever.”

## Matthew 11:2-11

2 John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, 3 “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting,<sup>[a]</sup> or should we keep looking for someone else?”

4 Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—5 the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. 6 And tell him, ‘God blesses those who do not turn away because of me.’<sup>[b]</sup>”

7 As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. “What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? 8 Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people with expensive clothes live in palaces. 9 Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. 10 John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say,

‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
and he will prepare your way before you.’<sup>[c]</sup>

11 “I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is!

### Footnotes:

- a. Matthew 11:3 Greek *Are you the one who is coming?*
- b. Matthew 11:6 Or *who are not offended by me.*
- c. Matthew 11:10 Mal 3:1.

James 5:7-10

### **Patience and Endurance**

7 Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. 8 You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.

9 Don't grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look—the Judge is standing at the door!

10 For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.