

11 *Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why will the “wilderness and the dry land” be glad?
2. How does the author seek to comfort those who “have an anxious heart”?
3. What does Isaiah say God is coming to do? What is being described in verses 5 to 9? The answer is in verse 10!
4. Looking at the passage in Matthew; how does Jesus describe his ministry?
5. Why might people be offended at Jesus (verse 6)?
6. How does Jesus’ ministry described by Matthew fit with the passage from Isaiah?
7. Looking at the passage from James; what situation is James addressing?
8. How might the situation of James readers relate to that of Isaiah’s hearers?
9. What message do both Isaiah and James share? How might it give comfort to their hearers?
10. How the message of Christ give comfort to you this advent?
11. How might you use the truth about Christ to comfort others?

An Advent Study of ISAIAH 35:1-10, JAMES 5:7-10 and MATTHEW 11:2-11

Jesus’ coming was the culmination of a period of waiting, and represented the end of the suffering of God’s people Israel. Jesus comes to bring peace and rest all who suffer.

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ISAIAH 35:1-10

- 1 *The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;*
- 2 *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.*
- 3 *Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.*
- 4 *Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."*
- 5 *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;*
- 6 *then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;*
- 7 *the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.*
- 8 *And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.*
- 9 *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.*
- 10 *And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

JAMES 5:7-10

- 7 *Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.*
- 8 *You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*
- 9 *Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.*
- 10 *As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

MATTHEW 11:2-11

- 2 *Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples*
- 3 *and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"*
- 4 *And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:*
- 5 *the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.*
- 6 *And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."*
- 7 *As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?*
- 8 *What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.*
- 9 *What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.*
- 10 *This is he of whom it is written, " 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'*