

Jesus, or if John was actually the one having doubts. The Old Testament people had doubts and Isaiah was able to make the promise of better times. John was in prison and Jesus didn't seem to be doing anything about the situation. Perhaps John wanted to see the fulfillment of the Prophecy (prisoners would be released.) Suffice it to say that Jesus pointed to Isaiah and showed Himself as the fulfillment of the prophecy of the One to come. Jesus said nice things about John but had better things to say about those who followed Him. We can without doubt believe in Him.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

¶ O God, our Father, in this most sacred hour we, Your children, bring our prayers and supplications with thanksgiving. Send us, according to what each of us need, the blessing of deliverance and renewal for our body and soul, forgive our sin, remove our temptation, if we are blind in spirit open our eyes, if we walk in uncertainty, guide our path, if we have impure thoughts, words or deeds cleanse us by Your Spirit, if we are deaf to You, open our ears to Your Word of truth, and if we are dead to salvation, quicken us by Your mighty power.

Let Your Holy Spirit descend on us, we pray, that we may not fail in that day when our Lord comes again as the light of the world, showing forth the hidden sin and proclaiming the evil of our heart. Wash us and make us clean that in that day we would be found without sin, and with our names printed in the Book of Eternal Life; printed on the life of Jesus.

We pray for Your Church throughout the world. Grant Your blessing on all Your servants who proclaim Your Word to the world. Give aid and strength to all missionaries and through them imbue Your Word with power, that all people may know You to be the only true God and Savior of all mankind. Rule over the hearts of the world, guide the decisions of those in authority, and sit in the secret councils of nations, to the end that peace and justice will prevail.

Bless all who are gathered before You this day, in the fellowship of the Spirit. We especially pray for those who gather here at Resurrection. Be with those of our number who are sick or under any affliction of body, mind, or spirit. Comfort them that they may, through their trials, learn of Your gracious power and readiness to help in time of every need.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

Endow us with Your grace, that we daily show forth the Love of Christ, in Whom we pray.

© Amen.

ADVENT THREE

Chant Tone



Introit

Rejoice in the — Lord always;*
again I will say, — Rejoice.

Blessèd is he whose help is the God of
— Jacob*

whose hope is in the | Lord his God.
Who made Heaven and Earth, the sea,
and all that is — in them,*
who keeps faith for — ever.

Who executes justice for | the oppressed,*
who gives food to the — hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free; the
Lord opens the eyes | of the blind.*

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed
down; the Lord loves the — righteous.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

Rejoice in the — Lord always;*
again I will say, — Rejoice.

(Antiphon, Philippians 4:4;
Psalm 146:5-8)

Collect of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of — Zion!*
Shout aloud, O daughter of Je | rusalem!

Behold, your king is com | ing to you;*
righteous and having salva | tion is He.

Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of the Lord.*
We bless you from the house | of the Lord.

(Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord. Heaven is Your throne and Earth Your footstool. You have shown Your concern for the welfare of the human race, from creation to the present. In times of trouble You have rescued us; in times of joy You have increased our happiness. For Your steadfast Love, O Lord accept our heartfelt thanks. Strengthen our sense of good judgment and use us to bring the good tidings to the people of the world. Hasten the day of universal peace promised with the second coming. This we ask in the name that is above every other name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THERE ARE MANY THEORIES TRYING TO EXPLAIN JOHN'S SENDING OF HIS DISCIPLES TO JESUS. Did John know he was to be executed, so he sent His disciples to join Jesus, or was John having doubts because Jesus (God) didn't seem interested in his predicament? If John did have doubts it certainly makes him as human as you and I. We struggle with our understanding of Jesus in the face of the overwhelming "evidence" presented by the world. The "evidence" presented by the Holy Spirit, (Who used the water and Word of our Baptism to make us over into His dwelling,) is greater. Jesus fulfilled the picture painted for us by the Old Testament Prophets. He looked exactly the way we expected. He is our Savior, the One we expected.

THEME OF THE DAY:

No Fear, No Doubt, Know Jesus

INTROIT—(Antiphon, Philippians 4:4;) Psalm 146:5-8

The last 5 Psalms are thought to be from the time of the rebuilding of the temple (so they may have been written by Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, or Zechariah.) This is the first liturgical use of Psalm 146 in our history. We make a proclamation of our joy in our God Who made all things for us. (Philippians 4, is covered below.)

COLLECT

We ask to be kept enlightened in the knowledge of Jesus as Savior.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Zephaniah 3:14-20

God's Word is for all people not only Israel. Zephaniah shows us how the Law serves the Gospel. God's Love in the Law serves God's Love for us in the Gospel. In our text Zephaniah was promising the eschatological kingdom of God. Your God is coming to dwell in the midst of the people in the world. He will come as a mighty warrior to save and to turn back the enemies. The world rejoices and the Lord Himself rejoices at the destruction of the enemies of His people. The God of wrath turns and becomes the God of mercy because of the sacrifice. When the king of Israel is with us we will have no fear. We will no longer fear God we will only know His Love.

GRADUAL—Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative

Our knowledge of life centers on the return of our king, the Lord. We depend on the promise of His Second Advent. The Old Testament people put their trust in the prophecy of Zechariah, God counted up the days and fulfilled His promise. The Love of God overwhelmed the Old Testament people, the Love of God in the person of Jesus overwhelms us in joy.

EPISTLE LESSON—Philippians 4:4-7

God gives joy of mind and heart to His people in this life. Paul implored the Christians in Philippi to respond in faith and to experience that joy by engaging in prayer with thanksgiving. He encouraged them to give thanks in everything by prayer and petition offered to a gracious and loving God. Remembering and recounting all the things God has done for us gives us a renewed confidence in His extreme Love for us and all creatures of the Earth. It fills us with joy in all things. God's Love always leads us to know His joy in all things.

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 7:18-35

John the Baptist introduced Jesus to all who would listen. John spoke wonderful words about the Savior, and Jesus in turn said wonderful things about John. It isn't clear if John sent his disciples to get them to follow