

READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

⁷ Thus says the LORD:

 Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
 and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
 proclaim, give praise, and say,
 “Save, O LORD, your people,
 the remnant of Israel.”

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north
 and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
 those with child and those in labor together;
 a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come,
 and with consolations I will lead them back;
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
 in a straight path where they shall not stumble,
for I have become a father to Israel,
 and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
 and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him
 and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock.”

¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob
 and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
 and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
 and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
 and they shall never languish again.

¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
 and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy;

 I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
 and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the LORD.

PSALM: Psalm 147:12-20

¹² Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem;
 praise your God, O Zion,
¹³ **who has strengthened the bars of your gates
 and has blessed your children within you.**

¹⁴ God has established peace on your borders
 and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

¹⁵ **God sends out a command to the earth,
 a word that runs very swiftly.**

¹⁶ God gives snow like wool,
 scattering frost like ashes.

¹⁷ **God scatters hail like bread crumbs.
 Who can stand against God's cold?**

¹⁸ The LORD sends forth the word and melts them;
 the wind blows, and the waters flow.

¹⁹ **God declares the word to Jacob,
 statutes and judgments to Israel.**

²⁰ The LORD has not done so to any other nation;
 they do not know God's judgments. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

GOSPEL: John 1:[1-9] 10-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

[¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.