

# Advent III

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Date: 17 December 2023

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Throughout his Gospel, his first epistle, and even in the book of Revelation, the Apostle John repeatedly refers to Jesus as the light of the world.

But why? Is it because John was one of only three disciples to witness our Lord's transfiguration? Yes, I'm certain that event definitely shaped the way John saw our Lord.

Or is it because John is one of the church's greatest theologians, and he wanted to make a link between Jesus and the light described in Genesis chapter 1? Yes, I believe that is also true.

But why else? Why else would John repeatedly refer to Jesus as the light of the world, even more than any other New Testament writer? Could it also be because Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God, the very one who reveals God's love to us?

Yes, I believe this is also true. For Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the only one, the only one fully capable of opening both our eyes and ears to the truth.

[ 1 : 2 4 ] Which now brings us to this morning's Gospel. In this morning's Gospel, we find John the Baptist sitting in prison. And when he hears about the works of Christ, John sends two of his disciples to ask our Lord, Are you the coming one?

Or do we look for another? For like us all, when times are difficult and tough, we begin to have doubts. We begin to focus on all the darkness and all the pain that surrounds us, rather than focusing on the light.

So what does our Lord tell John the Baptist's two disciples? He says, Go and tell John the things which you hear and see, the blind see and the lame walk.

The lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. Yet so often when we read the Holy Scriptures, we take God's miracles for granted.

We hear of so many miracles occurring in the Bible that we start to look at all of God's miracles as the same, as just a common, everyday biblical affair.

[ 2 : 4 1 ] But not all miracles are equal, and not all miracles are the same. For in the Old Testament, no prophet ever healed the eyes of a man born blind.

And in the Old Testament, no prophet ever healed the ears of the deaf. These are both things that the prophet Isaiah foretold that would serve as signs as the promised Messiah has finally come.

For both blindness and deafness involve our senses. For both blindness and deafness involve the way we perceive and understand our world. And in a similar way, without the light of Christ, without Jesus Christ, a lot of Scripture and a lot of Old Testament prophecy remain shrouded in mystery, clothed in darkness, and hidden from our eyes.

But with the light of Christ, a lot of Scripture and Old Testament prophecy begins to make sense because all is fulfilled. All comes to light in Him, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Jesus Christ is the key to unlocking any right understanding of Holy Scripture. And Jesus Christ is the light that illuminates our lives when times are difficult, are dark.

[ 4 : 11 ] For He alone gives us hope. For in Christ Jesus, in Christ Jesus, we actually see God. And in Christ Jesus, we actually hear the good news of our salvation.

And so, in this morning's Gospel, we find John the Baptist no longer enjoying the freedom of the vast wilderness surrounding the Jordan River, but instead sitting in prison inside one of King Herod's small and dark cells.

But then the light of Christ shines in John's darkness, and all of his doubts are expelled. Go and tell John the things which you hear and the things which you see, Jesus says.

The blind see and the lame walk. The lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

And upon hearing these words, John the Baptist is comforted. And upon hearing these words, our Lord's role as our Savior is confirmed. For upon hearing these words, John the Baptist, who spent his entire life preparing the way for the coming Messiah, is reminded that his ministry, his life, was not in vain.

[ 5 : 46 ] For Jesus Christ truly is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome. Therefore, this third Sunday in Advent, let us rejoice.

For the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not, cannot, and will not overcome it. For long ago, there was a man sent from God whose name was John the Baptist.

And this man came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, that all through him might believe. He himself was not that light, but was sent to bear witness to that light.

That was the true light which gives light to every man was coming into the world. So let us not lose heart, but like John the Baptist before us, let us find comfort in the good news of what so many witnesses have both seen and heard.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, that light which reveals the Father's love to us, that light which no darkness, not even the darkness of death, can overcome.

[ 7 : 11 ] Praise be to God, and amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.