

Meditations for Advent Week 3, December 15-20, 2025

Monday, December 15

The prophetic words of Isaiah 35:1-10 are composed in a poetic style of a **call**:

Transformation of creation (vs. 1-2)

Transformation of disabled humanity (v. 3)

Assertion of God's coming rescue (v. 4)

Transformation of disabled humanity (vs. 5-6a)

Transformation of creation (vs. 6b-7)

The **response** is not structured: it is a burst of images, all rejoicing and all on the road to Jerusalem where God news will be beyond the world's grim despair. We ponder this passage on the third Sunday of Advent...to get us ready for the impossibility that will make us dance and sing and march on and thank and drink and live! Here is the text:

The Call

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 shouting. 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 are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; ⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

^{6b} For waters shall 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; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

The Response

⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall 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 joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This word rests on the image of pilgrimage as a journey to God. What images do you use to describe your access to God?

Prayer: Dear God, help us hear your longing in the world's pain...and give us strength to trust your power to transform and to rejoice! Amen.