

Worship Material
A loving plan
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 8th December

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord, as we learn to know you better,
may our love overflow more and more
so that our lives may bring you glory and praise.

Amen.

Read Luke 1:68-79

Bible Notes

The lectionary leaps forward to the ministry of John the Baptist that heralds the start of Jesus' ministry. As with the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-2), Luke is careful to root John's proclamation in the period of Roman occupation. Tiberius rules through Pilate and the Herodian royal family. Annas and Caiaphas owe their priestly authority in Jerusalem to the same emperor. By contrast, John is directed by 'the word of God' (v. 2), the prophetic call that enabled Isaiah, exiled six centuries earlier in Babylon, to hope for a salvation that 'all flesh' would see (v.6). This is now entering a world governed by a greater empire than that of Babylon. God's loving plans for the world are taking shape in unlikely places. The wilderness was a region of complaint, rebellion and testing, where God's people seemed to have lost their way to freedom (Psalm 95:7-11). But for one prophet at least, it would be a hopeful place of new beginnings (Hosea 2:14), which is why John is there, preparing the way of the Lord by offering a simple ritual of washing to symbolise God's call to repent.

Prayer

God of the old and the new,
we praise you for the faithfulness that goes
before and behind all your people:

we celebrate your loving plan for the Church and the world.

We praise you for your compassion for all creation,
big and small, rich and poor, near and far:

we celebrate your loving plan for the Church and the world.

We praise you for this season of hope, of truth and of promise:

we celebrate your loving plan for the Church and the world.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Lord, may we go out in hope and love.

Through our actions and words,

help us to your loving plan of salvation with those we meet.

Amen.