

## Psalm and Readings Thursday 12th December 2024

### Psalm 53

Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.'  
They are corrupt, they commit abominable acts;  
there is no one who does good.

God looks down from heaven on humankind  
to see if there are any who are wise,  
who seek after God.

They have all fallen away, they are all alike  
perverse;  
there is no one who does good, no, not one.

Have they no knowledge, those evildoers,  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and do not call upon God?

There they shall be in great terror,  
in terror such as has not been.  
For God will scatter the bones of the ungodly;  
they will be put to shame, for God has rejected  
them.

O that deliverance for Israel would come from  
Zion!  
When God restores the fortunes of his people,  
Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

### Isaiah 48:1-11

Hear this, O house of Jacob,  
who are called by the name of Israel,  
and who came forth from the loins of Judah;  
who swear by the name of the Lord,  
and invoke the God of Israel,  
but not in truth or right.  
For they call themselves after the holy city,  
and lean on the God of Israel;  
the Lord of hosts is his name.

The former things I declared long ago,  
they went out from my mouth and I made  
them known;  
then suddenly I did them and they came to  
pass.  
Because I know that you are obstinate,  
and your neck is an iron sinew  
and your forehead brass,  
I declared them to you from long ago,  
before they came to pass I announced them to  
you,  
so that you would not say, 'My idol did them,

my carved image and my cast image commanded  
them.'

You have heard; now see all this;  
and will you not declare it?  
From this time forward I make you hear new  
things,  
hidden things that you have not known.  
They are created now, not long ago;  
before today you have never heard of them,  
so that you could not say, 'I already knew  
them.'  
You have never heard, you have never known,  
from of old your ear has not been opened.  
For I knew that you would deal very  
treacherously,  
and that from birth you were called a rebel.

For my name's sake I defer my anger,  
for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you,  
so that I may not cut you off.  
See, I have refined you, but not like silver;  
I have tested you in the furnace of adversity.  
For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it,  
for why should my name be profaned?  
My glory I will not give to another.

### 1 Thessalonians 3

Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we  
decided to be left alone in Athens; and we sent  
Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in  
proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen  
and encourage you for the sake of your faith, so  
that no one would be shaken by these  
persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that  
this is what we are destined for. In fact, when we  
were with you, we told you beforehand that we  
were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as  
you know. For this reason, when I could bear it no  
longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was  
afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted  
you and that our labour had been in vain.

But Timothy has just now come to us from you,  
and has brought us the good news of your faith  
and love. He has told us also that you always  
remember us kindly and long to see us—just as

we long to see you. For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

### **The Collect of the Day**

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power  
and come among us,  
and with great might succour us;  
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness  
we are grievously hindered  
in running the race that is set before us,  
your bountiful grace and mercy  
may speedily help and deliver us;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honour and glory, now and for ever.