

## **Scripture Lesson for January 3, 2021 – 2nd Sunday after Christmas**

### **Introduction to the Hebrew Lesson: Jeremiah 31:7-14**

If the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter of Jeremiah is about anything, it is about the future. In verse 7, the prophet, Jeremiah, says, “Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.” That’s about the future of Israel. In verse 11, Jeremiah says, “For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.” The investment is about the future. And finally, in verse 14, God speaks through the prophet to promise that the “people will be satisfied...” Listen to the whole story:

### **A Reading from Jeremiah 31:7-14**

For 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.”

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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

<sup>10</sup> 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 a flock.”

<sup>11</sup> For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> I will give the priests their fill of fatness,

and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the LORD.

### **Introduction: The Gospel Lesson John 1:10-18**

The opening chapter of the gospel of John, especially in verses 10-18, is like an alternative “creation” story and at the same time, an alternative “birth” story. Listen to a reading from John:

### **Gospel Lesson: John 1:10-18**

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

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son,<sup>[b]</sup> full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (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.’”) <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son,<sup>[c]</sup> who is close to the Father’s heart,<sup>[d]</sup> who has made him known.

**Continuing Text:** *“TO COME HOME TO YOURSELF May all that is unforgiven in you Be released. May your fears yield Their deepest tranquilities. May all that is un-lived in you Blossom into a future Graced with love.”* — John O'Donohue, **To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Invocations and Blessings**