

**A reading from Isaiah chapter 65 verses 17-25. You can find this reading on page 624 of your pew Bible.**

“For behold, I create new heavens  
and a new earth,  
and the former things shall not be remembered  
or come into mind.  
But be glad and rejoice forever  
in that which I create;  
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,  
and her people to be a gladness.  
I will rejoice in Jerusalem  
and be glad in my people;  
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping  
and the cry of distress.  
No more shall there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days,  
or an old man who does not fill out his days,  
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,  
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.  
They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
They shall not labor in vain  
or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord,  
and their descendants with them.  
Before they call I will answer;  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
and dust shall be the serpent's food.

They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain,”  
says the Lord.

**The Word of the Lord.**  
***Thanks be to God.***

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**Please join me in praying Psalm 126.**

Leader: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.

**People: Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;**

Leader: then they said among the nations,  
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

**People: The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are glad.**

Leader: Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
like streams in the Negeb!

**People: Those who sow in tears  
shall reap with shouts of joy!**

Leader: He who goes out weeping,  
bearing the seed for sowing,

**People: shall come home with shouts of joy,  
bringing his sheaves with him.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it  
was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Leader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to John.**

***People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized (for John had not yet been put in prison).

Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease."

**Leader: The Gospel of the Lord**

***People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.***