

Battle Baptist Church

Being Transformed Together



31st January 2021

Reflections on Isaiah 5-9 (Part 2)

During the first lockdown, our daughter, Emily, sent us some photographs of objects around her flat. They were all taken from unusual angles or very close up. We had to guess what each object was. Some were fairly easy to identify but others were really difficult. When she eventually told us the answer we said, "Oh yes, of course!"

Isaiah 7 can seem a little confusing. However, one thing that can be learnt from it is not to look at things from a human perspective but from God's perspective. The people of Judah were terrified that Israel and Syria in the north were going to invade them. But God said it would come to nothing. On the other hand, Ahaz, the king of Judah, was pinning his hopes on Assyria with whom he had made an alliance. But he was looking at things from a human perspective. In today's problems and threats whether from Brexit and how it is working out, or from COVID-19 which is having an impact in all sorts of ways, we need to learn to trust God and to look at things from his perspective. Maybe the real threats we face are not so much from outside but from within: from corruption, complacency and compromise. These much more subtle threats are just as real, nonetheless. For example, the break-up of family units for whatever reason, can lead to poverty, isolation and mental health issues. Or the way we celebrate and reward talent above personal integrity and wholesomeness leads to God's values being downgraded and eroded. Have we learnt to live with these things, or do we speak against them?

Chapter 8 leaves me with a very bleak prospect. If my hope and trust is in the wrong thing, the wrong people, and the wrong policies, then I am lost. It is God I should look to; he is the one I should fear and obey. If my trust is in a COVID vaccine, a Brexit deal or whatever it may be, ultimately it will let me down. I need to trust God which means believing, acting upon and relying on his promises, sticking firmly to his

values, and not being swayed by the consensus around me. (which doesn't mean neglecting to have a vaccination!)

If the church is part of the community in which it is situated then what is in the community will be in the church. The difference is that in the church Jesus shines his light into the darkness. When sin is shown up to be what it is, it must lead to repentance, but first on our part we may need to demonstrate total acceptance, unconditional love, understanding, patience, time, and energy. The repentance may come later. But we need to take care. We don't want people to become just like us, but to become more like Jesus, putting aside our own preconceptions and prejudices.

The stone (8:14) is the cornerstone. Like the keystone in the middle of an arch, it holds everything together. Without it the arch and the building around it collapses. If it's left lying around, it just becomes a trip hazard. God is good, compassionate, and kind, not wanting anyone to perish but if we neglect him, or worse, reject him, we have nothing to hold us together. "The cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord," (Ephesians 2:20-21).

So whether it is a stump or a stone, Lord, help us to see things as you see them. Help us see the potential you see, help us to make you, the keystone, central in all we are and all we do so we support one another being joined together in you and demonstrating your goodness and greatness to those around us.

Steve Reading



PRAYER POINTERS

COVID-19

Pray for leaders of countries with high rates of the virus: Portugal, Spain, the Baltic States, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, UK, US and Panama. For decisive action that will bring down the rate of infection.

Mental Health

Pray for emotional and mental resilience: for exhausted key workers; for those isolated and alone; for children missing their friends; for families struggling with home schooling; for those who have lost loved ones.

'How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty!
My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.'
Psalm 84:1,2

NEWSLETTER

31st January 2021

Battle Baptist Church
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Battle Baptist Church is part of Life with Hope Trust; registered charity 1134288, Mount Street, Battle,

East Sussex TN33 0EG.

- Website: www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk
- Telephone and answerphone (01424) 774825 • Email: office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk
- Caterpillar Preschool direct telephone line:

Church maintenance issues:
zionpremisesteam@gmail.com



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

BBC Week of Prayer— feedback: Please get in touch with the office to let us know what God has been saying to you this week, whether it be a particular scripture, a picture, or a word.

'For Further Fought...': Go to the church [website](#) to find links to materials for further study and reflection.

Reflections: Check out our [YouTube](#) channel for weekly reading of the Psalms and other material. New 'Navigate' discipleship films begin this week.

Men's Social, Friday 5th February 8pm: Join us for a 'Virtual Pub Night'! All the details you need are set out in the flyer that has been emailed out with this newsletter. Please contact Rob H if you'd like to take part (719057 / 07983 666225).

WORLD VIEW

Afghanistan

Praise God that a new airstrip has been opened in central Afghanistan. This will empower the local population with sustainable livelihoods in a fragile environment, preventing disease; increasing access to clean water and safe toilets; keeping mums and babies healthy; increasing literacy; and empowering communities to care for the mental health of the most vulnerable among them, thereby advancing the Kingdom.

'Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 2:3b-5



While we are not meeting collectively, why not use this guide for your personal devotions?

Pause, be still and invite God to meet you afresh, filling you by His Holy Spirit.

Pray giving thanks for all God's goodness

Worship

If you have a Worship CD, DVD or the means to go online and listen to something why not play a worship song, you don't have to sing along if you're not comfortable doing so or can't: simply listen to the words

Read a Psalm

The Psalms are a great source of hope and help, written in good times and bad. Pick one; read it through slowly. Pause. Read it through again.

What is God saying?

Give space allowing time for God to speak. What is he saying? Is he speaking to you personally or is it a message for the wider church?

Prayers for others

1) Use the prayer on the reverse side of this. It is taken from the Baptist Together website and their call to prayer in response to the Coronavirus. They rightly encourage us to play in being a Beacon of Hope at the moment. They remind us that our neighbours and communities need love, hope, peace and an eternal perspective and we can offer this in abundance, in the name of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:18).

2) Pray for different ministries of the church, even though they are not meeting at this time. Think of the different people who usually attend and the reasons and aims of the activities.

3) Using the church members' directory take a page a day, and pray through the names.

Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is a great resource that Jesus gave us.

Grace