

**8th Dec 2019 Advent 2 The Kingdom**  
**Isaiah 11:1-10 Romans 15:4-13 Matt 3:1-12**

**Recap:**

Last week we were thinking about the HOPE that we have as Christians, Hope of a different future  
A promised future reality that touches our present life because we are waiting for something which brings us hope

Today we are going to think some more about that future reality.

**Setting the Scene:**

God had been silent for 400 years between OT & NT

Isaiah - our Old Testament reading today lived about 700 years BC

Malachi was the last prophet of the Old Testament and he became a prophet in 430 BC.

After Malachi there had been no prophets, God had been silent.

And then John the baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea.

**John's Ministry:**

John Baptist then came as the herald before the ministry of Jesus, He was sent to prepare the way for Jesus and in our reading today he quotes from Isaiah chapter 40

Johns message was intended to 'wake everyone up' from their sleepiness.

They were not ready to receive their long awaited and long promised Messiah.

John called them to repent and be baptised... in the very river where 1000+years before God's chosen people had crossed over in to the promised land

Wake up people! Smell the coffee!! Jesus is coming back and you need to be ready!!!

Remember last week we were reminded of Noah... needing to be in the Ark and ready for the rains that WOULD come. Last weeks gospel reading was of Jesus warning his disciples to be ready for the unexpected hour

John was sent with this preparatory message. REPENT! Confess your sins and get ready! One is coming after me who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.

John was not talking about just an outer action or an insurance policy.

He was vocal about the need for peoples actions to match up to their words. He was angry with the Pharisees and Sadducees who appeared to be coming for baptism just to look the part. He warned them that they should bear fruit worthy of repentance (Vs8)

Turn your lives back to God and be fruitful. It's no good just claiming you ancestry and hoping that is enough. It is not... your lives need turning around. Every tree needs to bear good fruit because if it does not it will be cut down and burned. There is no place for fruitless trees!

John recognised the power and the holiness of Jesus. John knew that he was not worthy even to carry Jesus' sandals. John knew that the Kingdom of heaven was near and he had been sent to prepare the way for Jesus.

**Isaiah's prophecy:**

Hundreds of years before John, Isaiah had painted a beautiful picture of what this new Kingdom was going to be like, what the Kingdom of Heaven is and what it will be like when Jesus is fully at the helm once again.

This new Kingdom will come as a humble beginning starting as a shoot from the stock of Jesse, branches will grow from that shoot. And he goes on to describe the Kingdom in detail  
Jesse was King David's father and the promise had been and to David that he would have a descendent who would sit on an eternal throne

A Divine Power vs 2-3

7 fold Spirit (Window)

The King would be anointed with Spirit of the Lord to enable Him in his task as King of this new Kingdom

The spirit of the Lord resting upon Him

with the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge fear of the Lord

This sevenfold spirit of anointing is also written about in Revelation 1:4

Jesus is the long awaited for, anointed one who delights in the fear of the Lord

Absolute Justice Vs 3-5

Jesus will judge the earth perfectly...not with senses that can distort

the truth but with the standard of absolute truth. Most of us know what our eyesight can be like.

We go to the opticians and they show us all those lines of letters - no longer a chart on the back of the door but a whole series of lines and letters that are projected onto a screen. They twiddle this button and tweak that angle and hopefully get to the point when what we see is once again in focus and legible. I'll never forget the day I tried on my first pair of reading glasses. There was a paddle on the table - a bit like an old fashioned dressing table mirror and it had print in ever decreasing sizes on the back and I saw it and said - I can read this !!!

We have, I am sure, all played Chinese whispers at some point - when one person whispers something to the person next to them who has to whisper exactly what they have heard to the next person and so on until the original message sender gets their message back - or not!!! Usually something completely unrecognisable!!

Isaiah is telling us that the Lord shall come who shall judge but not with the inaccuracy of human eyes or ears but with the standard of absolute truth which is rooted in his holy fear & respect for God.. The Lords judgment will be of finely honed accuracy - not by deceitful eyes or persuaded ears but by a perfectly tuned delight - sense of smell - that is based upon holy fear of God

Perfect Peace Vs 6-9

However good a Govt or society, there is always an element of sin

With Christ there will be absolute peace & tranquility...

He paints this beautiful picture...Lion & Lamb, the leopard and the kid, the calf and the lion, all being lead by a small child

This invincible peace surpasses our present understanding but Isaiah prophecies that the greatest concern will be glorifying the Lord and all aspects of His magnificent creation. Nothing else will matter to us.

Universal reach Vs 10-16

And this awesome Kingdom is not just for Jews but for all nations.

Just see how many times the word Gentile appears in our reading from Romans!

We talked last week about the hope we have as Christians. The door that is sometimes only just ajar, at other times is wide open, the door of hope. The hope that we have in Christ. The hope that impacts our present situation because of the future reality in which we believe. But maybe we wonder just what that future reality is like.

Well - Isaiah has painted that picture for us and Paul in his letter to the Romans has endorsed the picture- people living in harmony with one another, Gentiles (people from all nations) glorifying God under His rule, in His Kingdom

Isaiah wrote the beautiful words that we could sing...! the earth shall be SO FULL of the knowledge of the Lord that it shall be like the overflowing waters of the sea

This is our hope!!! The hope that, as people of God who repent and bear good fruit, we are part of God's glorious Kingdom, which is near, and will one day be experienced in all its glory.

A Kingdom ruled by Jesus

A Kingdom of absolute justice

A Kingdom of perfect peace

A Kingdom of universal reach

### **Conclusion:**

What ever happens to us in the next day, week, month or year, which ever party gets in to parliament after Thursdays election, whatever happens re: Brexit, whatever our health or wealth challenges, whether Santa visits us in a few weeks time or not!!!

Christ came and died on the cross for each and everyone of us so that ALL our sins, the big and the small, the seen and the unseen, may be forgiven by Him.

So that we may have that hope in Jesus, the one who comes from the Root of Jesse and who stands as the banner for the peoples, the one to whom we will all go and find our resting place, the one who fills us with all joy and peace in believing.

Pray for Joe, Maggie, Robyn & Theo

pre blessing

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
And the Blessing of God.....