



The Benefice of the Piddle Valley, Hilton & Ansty, Cheselbourne and Melcombe Horsey

Sunday 17th November 2019
2nd Sunday before Advent

Altar Colour – Green

Readings: Mal. 4: 1-2, Psalm 98, 2 Thess. 3: 6-13, Luke 21: 5-19

Collect: 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. **Amen**

Malachi 4:1-2 (ESV) - *The Great Day of the LORD*

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

COMMENT: The name Malachi literally means “my messenger” but we do not know whether this was actually the name of the prophet. The rebuilding of the temple had already been completed (circa 515 BC). The keeping of the covenant relationship with God was the great concern of this little known prophet of the period soon after the return of the exiles from Babylon. To maintain the sanctity of the temple and its sacrificial rituals has become the chief expression of this relationship. To achieve this had become the chief role of the priesthood in difficult times during the first hundred years or so after the exile. In fact, the priests had replaced the monarchy as the chief authorities and representatives of the nation as well as serving a strictly religious function. In this passage, speaking for the LORD, the prophet utters a grave warning that all unfaithful Israelites would be destroyed like the stubble left and burned after the harvest. The season of harvest in Palestine comes in the late spring or early summer. In the intense heat of summer may indeed feel like the oven metaphorically describing what awaits those unworthy of the covenant relationship. The colourful phrase “root and branch” has come into the English language to describe the total destruction envisaged. In v2, the threat to the unfaithful vanishes as a totally different set of

metaphors describes how the faithful will be rewarded for their righteousness. They will receive the welcome refreshment and healing the rising sun of the early morning brings. Christians have interpreted this promise that for those who revere God's name "the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing on its wings" as a prophecy fulfilled by Jesus. Charles Wesley used the metaphor in v3 of his famous exultation of the coming of Christ in "Hark! the herald angels sing" and also in the hymn "Christ whose glory fills the skies".

Luke 21:5-19 (ESV) - *Destruction of the Temple*

And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" And he said, "See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once."

Jesus Foretells Wars and Persecution

Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.

COMMENT: Long before Jesus' ministry, a rich eschatological (= the advent of God's new age at the end of time) tradition existed in Judaism. The apostolic church took over this tradition and reinterpreted it as being fulfilled in the messianic age Jesus inaugurated. After the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem about 40 years after the Resurrection, Mark expressed this tradition in words of prophecy ostensibly spoken by Jesus himself (Mark 13). Parts of this passage in Luke 21 had their source in Mark's gospel; other parts came from Luke's own sources. Verses 5-11 and 16-17 belong to Mark, while 12-15 and 18-19 are material only found in Luke. The two are so cleverly fused as to be almost indistinguishable.

In Luke Jesus predicts the persecutions which his disciples would encounter, even to betrayal by members of their own families. This may well have been happening in Luke's own day. Jesus had also promised that they would be given the words with which to defend themselves before their persecutors (cf. Acts 4:8ff). Despite this, they would not be harmed (verse 18). There were of course exceptions, and some disciples were called to lose their lives - for example Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7:54ff) and he also recorded that James the Apostle had been executed by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2). The call for some to be ready to lose their lives had already been noted by Luke; Chapter 9:24 and Chapter 17:33. The purpose of this message of Jesus was to warn of judgment to come and to encourage the faithful that come what may; God is still in control of historical events. Instead of predicting what would inevitably happen in coming troubles and persecutions, he was warning that things would get worse before they got better. As with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God has a purpose in which all events of human time and place are being gathered up. In the end God's reign will come to pass as God determined from the beginning. In the coming of Jesus as a human being into the world where human history takes place, God has inaugurated this reign of sovereign love. The Spirit of God is now at work within human beings and all their myriad relationships, good and bad, to bring about what God ultimately intends for creation. Human history is still unfinished business, but it also is the place where God is at work. The full consummation of God's purpose is yet to come. Eschatology attempts to describe what this consummation will be like. What can be taken as true in all of this is that God reigns. We live in God's world, the God who came in Jesus and is coming to complete God's historical purpose of reconciling all creation to God's eternal love.

Short Preface: And now we give you thanks because you sent him to redeem us from sin and death and to make us inheritors of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may with joy behold his appearing, and in confidence may stand before him.

Post Communion: Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing: Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Benefice Prayer Requests:

Please continue to pray for our neighbours and friends who ask our intercession and are suffering, in hospital, or recovering from illness or surgery: June Kellaway, Ann Lambert, Faye Lord, Geoff Harris, Katie, Lisa Bailey, Roger Gray, Bernard, Martin, Marion Traynor...

Please pray for the many Doctors, Nurses and carers in our community, our schools, families, for the emergency services, our police and armed forces.



Requiescat in pace

Terry Jeanes, Piddlehinton (Funeral details to follow)

What's going on around the Benefice!

Food Bank: Thank you for continuing to support the Food Bank. I have delivered offerings from Alton Pancras this week.

Tuesday 19th November Stepping Stones at 7.30pm: Orchard Cottage Melcombe Bingham. Call Richard and Julie Saunders for details

Thursday 21st November: 9.00am Morning Prayer, Coffee and a Chat with the Rector at Piddletrenthide

Thursday 21st November: 9.30am Morning Prayer, with Alan Neades Piddlehinton



24th November 2019 Altar Colour – White Jer. 23: 1-6 Psalm 46 Col. 1: 11-20 Luke 23: 33-43	<i>Christ the King</i> 8.30am Holy Communion 9.30am Family Eucharist * Joint with Piddletrenthide 6.00pm Sung Evening Prayer 6.00pm Sung Evening Prayer	Cheselbourne Alton Pancras Piddlehinton Hilton
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*Refreshments and Fellowship after the service

Dates for your diary

Rehearsals for Milton Abbey Combined Carol Service Thursday's at 7.30pm in St James, Milton Abbas. If you are interested in taking part, please contact either James Crawshaw or Sue Widdowson.

The Ridgeway Singers and Band – West Gallery Carols - Sunday 1st December, All Saints Church Piddletrenthide. Tickets please contact Janet Keen or Terry Cowley

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