

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

Sunday 6th December 2020 – Advent Sunday
(Altar Colour Purple)

Readings: Isa 40: 1-11, Psalm 85: 8-end, 2 Peter 3: 8-15,
Mark 1: 1-8



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

Old Testament: Isaiah 40: 1-11 (ESV) - Comfort for God's People

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare^[a] is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

The Word of God Stands Forever

A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The Greatness of God

Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news, lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

New Testament: 2 Peter 3:8-15a (ESV) - The Day of the Lord Will Come

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Final Words

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation.

COMMENT: The author of this letter was some unknown Christian elder early 2nd Century AD using Peter's name to give his message authority. This type of pseudo-graphia was common practice in ancient times. The letters of the New Testament include several other examples of this. A case has also been made for dating it in the 80s and 90s of the 1st Century as the second generation of Christians tried to come to terms with two serious issues: firstly, the end of the apostolic leadership of the church and secondly, the Hellenistic cultural milieu into which the church was moving even as it severed its connections with the Jewish culture of Palestine. The letter is an example of Christianity's difficult transition from a Jewish to a Hellenistic environment, and provides an example of how the message of the gospel was preserved through the process of cultural translation. The three brief chapters appear as a testament or farewell discourse in the form of a letter. Its purpose was to remind the readers of the apostle's teaching and defend against false teachers who are casting doubt on the Second Coming of Jesus and advocating immoral behaviour. Four separate sections can be read as the author's testament interspersed with three apologies for the true faith and two exhortations to godly living. The present reading is taken from the third apologetic section and the final exhortation. It deals specifically with the reason for the delay in Christ's return. This is due to God's patience so that no one may perish, but come to repentance and faith in a renewed relationship with God (Verse 9). There follows a reiteration of the typical eschatological message found throughout the New Testament: The day of the Lord will come unexpectedly. One can hypothesize that the repeated reference to destructive fire (V-10 & 12) may reflect the possible provenance of the letter in the Roman church. Tradition holds that the persecution of Christians for the great fire set by Nero in 64 AD was the occasion for Peter's martyrdom. Even a generation or two later, a vivid memory in the Roman Christian community. Whoever the author was and whenever he wrote, he sought to encourage his audience to lead "lives of holiness and godliness while for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (V- 12). The certainty of the Parousia necessitated such holy living. To accomplish this, moral effort on their part was required, exemplified by peace and purity (V14). They were to regard the patience of God as their salvation, not a source of spiritual frustration (V15). This reading ends before the second half of the verse which makes reference to Paul; "*just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him*", hence ending at '15a'! This may well be a reference to Paul's letter to the Romans and intended as proof that this letter is from Peter himself who knew that Paul had written to the Roman church. More likely, however, it confirms the pseudo-graphical character of the letter. No church leader of the 2nd Century made any reference to 2 Peter. Origen (AD 217-251) did not regard it as canonical. The 3rd Century historian Eusebius linked it with James, Jude, 2 and 3 John as "disputed, nevertheless familiar to the majority." Such scholarly intricacies may be of little consequence to most modern readers, a document such as 2Peter, can be very helpful to our own time and generation as we move from the age of Christendom to the culture of pluralistic globalism early in the third

millennium of the Christian era. Orthodoxy such as this letter exhibits can be an early casualty of ‘any transitional period’ in church history.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8 (ESV) - John the Baptist Prepares the Way

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” John appeared, baptising in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”

COMMENT: Mark’s Gospel begins not with Jesus, but with John the Baptist. Immediately he quotes from Isaiah 40, using this reference to the prophet of Israel’s return from exile in Babylon in 639 BC to the coming of the Messiah. Obviously, he intended that the Baptist be seen as the prophet who prepared the way for Jesus, the Christ/Messiah. This was an intentional use of the Old Testament scriptures for a serious theological purpose. This reuse of Prophecy (already fulfilled in the return of the exiles) was common amongst Rabbis, who searched the Hebrew Scriptures for every possible prophecy about the coming of Israel’s Messiah, and they understood the coming of the Messiah into the world as the ultimate fulfilment of those prophecies. Mark concentrates on the repentance John called for as the appropriate preparation for the coming of the Messiah (V 4). He downplays John’s role and pointed instead to the one who would baptise the people with the Holy Spirit instead of water. Much scholarly debate still surrounds the character of John and his mission. It would appear that John was recognised more as one of the Old Testament prophets whose habits were such as to draw attention to his ministry. John’s call for baptism, however, must have seemed very unusual to most Jews of his time. The custom of baptising converts to Judaism would have been regarded as an affront to Jewish self-consciousness. In other words he was saying you are not the people of God – come and be baptised to become the people of God – an insult indeed to those who considered themselves to be perfect Jews! The essential point of John’s message was that only a new beginning symbolised by passing through the waters of Jordan, as God had led Israel out of Egypt and across the Jordan, would suffice to restore Israel’s relationship with God. In the immersion of baptism these presumptions and the whole of old ways of life would be washed away symbolically. Now that God’s love and purpose for Israel were being fulfilled, John called everyone to prepare by repenting and being baptised.

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**

The 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 list.



- Please pray for those who are suffering from poor health, those recovering from hospital treatment or surgery, for the grieving and lonely; including: Frances Mallett, Ann Lambert, Tim Jeanes, Geoff Harris, Robin Dibble, June Kellaway, Robin Saunders, Whelan family, Anna Thomas, Bernard & David.
- Please pray for our friends, family and neighbours, as we move into learn to live with the new national tiered restrictions.
- For all those in care homes, and the staff, including: Roger Gray (Dorchester) and June Smith (Warminster).



Requiescat in pace

Valerie Moreton
Stanley Calvert

Benefice Notices

Public Worship & Live Streaming



- Public Worship will resume Sunday 6th December 2020
Love God, Love your neighbour and please follow the Covid protocols in church.
- Churches will continue to be opened for Private Prayer. (See separate timetable)
- Daily live streaming of the offices will continue.
- Live Streamed Sunday Services - 9.30am Communion and 6pm Evening Prayer.

Facebook to access livestream:

https://www.facebook.com/piddlevalley/?eid=ARAxjQNj5mPHQUQD2hKEx_uzUyyf17basudX3D22bYJx4HsCh7ByYB8lItrMbHhsARvgwbTqvapn-Glq

YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0ru_v3_1MZyzx72ka63g4A

Food Bank: Please leave donations in church or at the Vicarage, Piddletrenthide.

Sunday 13th December 2020 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Readings: Isa 61: 1-4, 8-end, Psalm 126, 1 Thess 5: 16-24, John 1: 6-8, 19-28

9.30am Communion at Piddletrenthide

11.00am Communion at Melcombe Horsey

6.00pm Evening Prayer at Piddlehinton – Toy Collection for Woman's Refuge

Rector - Fr. Roger J. Butcher SSC KSJ

The Vicarage, Church Lane, Piddletrenthide. DT2 7QY. Tel. 01300 348211 / 07502 118210

Email. rector.piddlevalleybenefice@gmail.com



Facebook: @piddlevalley



Website: <https://piddlevalleybenefice.com>